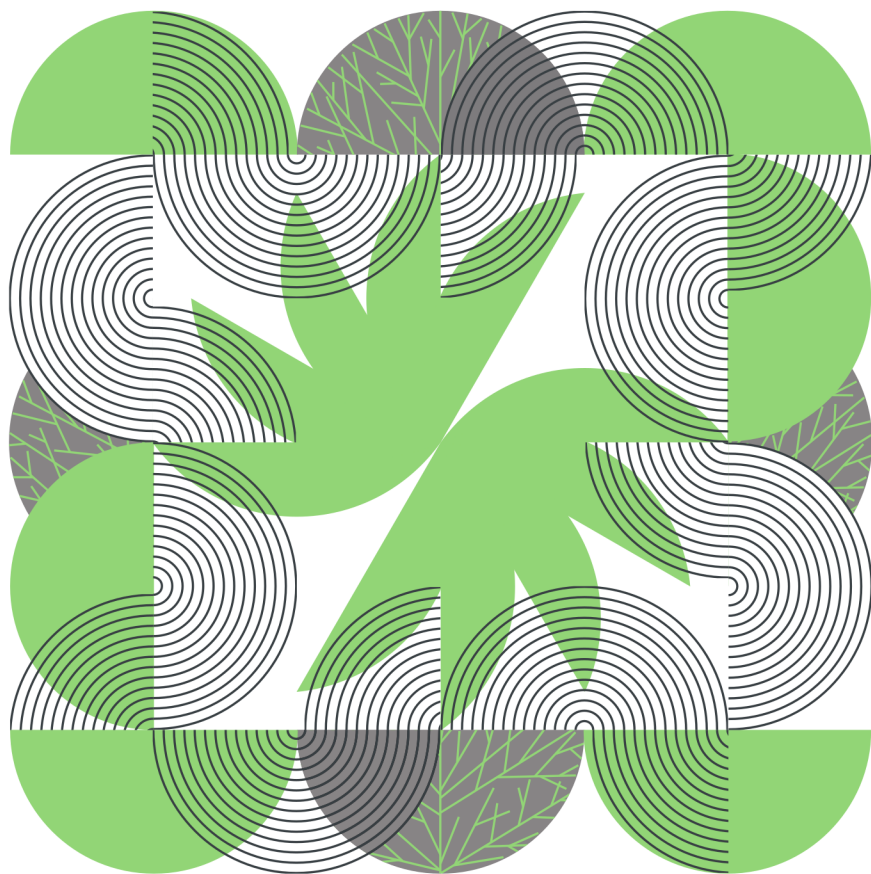


Arnasguneak hizkuntza gutxituen biziberritzean

Nazioarteko konferentzia

Territories of higher speaker density in minoritised language communities

International conference



**SOZIOLINGUISTIKA
KLUSTERRA**
Euskara biziberritzeko
ikergunea



**UDALERRI
EUSKALDUNEN
MANKOMUNITATEA**



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Territories of higher speaker density in minoritised language communities

International Conference

Asier Basurto Arruti, Iñaki Lurrebaso Biteri
(editoreak / editors)

Egileak / Authors

Asier Basurto, Conchúr Ó Giollagáin, Iñaki Lurrebaso,
Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones, Étienne Lemyre, Mikel Zalbide

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*Hizkuntza gutxitu batean bizitzeko
ahalegina egiten dutenei*

*To those striving to live their lives
in a minoritized language*

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1. Hitzaurrea

Argitalpen hau 2025eko urriaren 16an eta 17an Azpeitian egin zen «Arnasguneak hizkuntza gutxituen biziberritzean» nazioarteko konferentziaren testuinguruan sortu da. Topaketa haren helburua hau izan zen: hizkuntza gutxituen biziberritze-prozesuetan hiztun-dentsitate handiko eremu edo arnasguneek duten garrantzia aztertzea eta gai horren inguruko ikerketa, esperientzia eta proposamenak partekatzea.

Hizkuntza gutxituen kasuan, arnasguneak funtsezko espazio soziolinguistikoak dira: bertan hizkuntza gutxitua nagusi izaten da eguneroko komunikazioan, eta belaunaldiz belaunaldi transmititzeko baldintzak indartsuagoak dira. Horregatik, eremu horiek hizkuntzaren bizitasunaren adierazle garrantzitsuak dira eta, aldi berean, hizkuntza gutxituen biziberritze-estrategien ikuspegitik erreferentziazko laborategi sozialak.

Azken hamarkadetan, euskararen soziolinguistikan eta hizkuntza-politikan arreta berezia eskaini zaie arnasguneei. Hala ere, fenomeno horren antzeko errealitateak munduko beste hizkuntza gutxitu askotan ere identifikatu dira, eta hainbat izendapen jaso dituzte: hiztun-dentsitate handiko eremuak, hizkuntza-gotorlekuak edo komunitate bernakularrak. Horrek guztiak agerian uzten du gaiak nazioarteko dimentsioa duela eta diziplina arteko begirada behar duela. Testuinguru horretan sortu zen konferentzia hau antolatzeke ekimena: esperientziak elkarrekin kontrastatzeko, ezagutza partekatzeko eta hizkuntza gutxituen biziberritzean arnasguneek izan dezaketen eginkizuna sakonago aztertzeke.

Konferentzia **Udako Euskal Unibertsitateak (UEU)**, **Udalerri Euskaldunen Mankomunitateak (UEMA)**, **Soziolinguistika Klusterrak** eta **Coppieters Fundazioak** elkarlanean antolatu zuten, eta hainbat erakunde publikoren babesarekin egin zen. Ekimenaren izaera lankidetzan oinarritu zen: ikerketa akademikoa, politika publikoak, tokiko esperientziak eta gizarte-ekimenak elkarriketan jartzea izan zuen xede, arnasguneen gaia ikuspegi zabal eta integratutik lantzeko.

Liburu honetan biltzen diren testuak konferentzia hartan aurkeztutako ponentzia eta gogoeta batzuetatik abiatuta prestatu dira. Helburua ez da jardunaldi haren transkripzio hutsa eskaintzea, baizik eta bertan sortutako ideiak eta eztabaidak modu egituratuan jaso eta komunitate zientifiko zein sozial zabalago bati eskaintzea.

Espero dugu lan honek ekarpena egitea arnasguneen inguruko ezagutza sendotzen, hizkuntza gutxituen biziberritze-estrategietan duten eginkizuna argitzen eta etorkizuneko ikerketa- zein ekintza-ildo berriak inspiratzen.

2. Zer dira eta zer ez dira arnaguneak? Zergatik dira garrantzitsuak?

Mikel Zalbide (Euskaltzaindia)

Editoreen oharra

Arnagune kontzeptua euskal soziolinguistikara ekarri, definitu eta zabalpena emateko lanetan ageriko bidegile izan da Mikel Zalbide. Fishmanen lanak eta egile horrekin izandako zuzeneko harremanak izan ditu horretarako oinarri, alde batetik. Eta, bestetik, euskararen indarberritzeari lotutako jarduera profesionala, ikerketa-ibilbidea eta hausnarketa. Gaiari buruzko Nazioarteko Konferentzia eta hari lotutako argitalpenaren baitan eraikitako eztabaida eta ezagutza Mikel Zalbidek ezarritako zimenduen gainean sortutakoa izan da. Horregatik, 2025eko urriaren 16an eta 17an Azpeitian (Euskal Herria) egindako saioetan Zalbidek arnaguneen inguruan duen ikuspegia laburbiltzen duen bideo-elkarrizketa hedatu zen (<https://vimeo.com/1127291981>). Eta, horregatik ere, esku artean duzun argitalpen honetan egile horrek arnaguneen ideia azaltzeko idatzitako artikulu argigarri baten zenbait pasarte jasotzea beharrezko ikusi da.

Bat Soziolinguistika Aldizkariaren 110. zenbakia gaiari buruzko monografikoa izan zen. Bertan, besteak beste, Zalbidek arnagune kontzeptuaren ezaugarri nagusiak xehatu zituen «Arnaguneak. Etorkizuneko erronkak» izeneko artikuluan¹.

Jarraian dakarkiguna aipatutako artikulutik hautatutako pasarte batzuk dira. Lana bere osotasunean eta xehetasunean ezagutzeko borondatea duenak jatorrizko aldaerara jotzea du biderik zuzenena. Kasu honetan, zatiak erauzteak berekin dakarren ikuspegi partzialaz jakitun, baina jatorrizkoari aldaketarik ez egiteko irizpideak gidatuta, hiru atal bere horretan ekartzea hobetsi da. Honakoak dira, hain zuzen ere, artikulutik hartutako hiru atalak:

- I. Zer da arnagunea, oro har?
- II. Zer ez dira arnagune, partez edo osoz?
- III. Zergatik dira arnaguneak hain garrantzitsu, euskara indarberritzeko?

1. Zalbide, Mikel (2019). Arnaguneak. Etorkizuneko Erronkak. *Bat Soziolinguistika aldizkaria*, 110(1), 11-78. <https://bat.soziolinguistika.eus/produktua/bat-110-2019-1-arnaguneak-etorkizuneko-erronkak/>

I. Zer da arnasgunea, oro har?

Joshua A. Fishman-ek (1991, 58. or.) bere *Reversing Language Shift* ezagunean «physical breathing space» aipatzen du une batez: «breathing space»² horren itzulpena da *arnasgunea* (Zalbide, 2001). Lehen hurbilketa moduan, «demographically concentrated space where Xish can be on its own turf, predominant and unharassed». Hots, eta gureraren etorriz,

- Euskal kontzentrazio demografiko handia du arnasguneak: euskaraz dakite bertako herritar guztiek edo gehienek eta, bereziki, *eguneroko mintzajardun arruntean herritar guztiak edo gehienak euskaraz ari izaten dira beren artean, arnasgune barruan.*
- Eguneroko mintzajardun arruntak euskararen aldeko nagusitasun-moldaera argia du bertan, eta nagusitasun hori ez da eztabaidatzen: «predominant and unharassed». Euskaraz egiten da hor, besterik gabe. Gizarte-araua bizi da hori: Donostiako Kontxan bainu-jantzia edo bikiniak, ez ordea sostena eta kuleroa, janztea bezain arau zabal³. Arau zabal eta, zergatik ez dakigula baina ondo kontuan dugularik, haustezin. Gauza bera gertatzen da arnasguneetan: bertakoek bertakoekin, hitzez eta ohiko solasgai bizi-pizgarriez, euskaraz jardutea arau nagusi da ingurumen horietan.
- Eguneroko mintzajardun arruntean euskarak ageri duen nagusitasun gotor horri eskerrak, bertako *biztanleen ama-hizkuntza belaunez belaun transmititzen da* arnasgunean, *mintzaldaketa ohargarririk gabe*. Transmisio horri eskerrak, *hizkuntzaren mendez mendeko iraupen-katea ez da arnasgunean eteten*. Arriskuak arrisku, euskarazko nagusitasun-moldaerari eusten zaion artean *belaunez belaun transmisio-katea ez dago galzori bizian*.
- Eguneroko mintzajardun arruntak oinarri *ezagunak* ditu, jardun-gune eta harreman-sare nagusiei dagokienez: etxea eta auzoa, kalea eta lagunartea,

2. Jakintza-esparru zabalagoetan ere aurkitu izan du *Breathing Space* terminoak aplikazio akademikorik. Medikuntza-alorrean, alergia kontuei buruzko lanetan, ikus adibidez Gregg Mitman-en 2007ko *Breathing Space: How Allergies Shape Our Lives and Landscapes*. Yale University Press. Aplikazio horrek ez du gure arnasgune-kontzeptuarekin lotura zuzenik. Joshua A. Fishman-ek hizkuntza-soziologiaren sailean, ahuldutako hizkuntzak indarberritzeko saioen atalean, sortutako formulazioak ari gara hemen, ez osasun medikoaren alorrekoak.

3. Arau hori ez da erabatekoa: badira noski eguzkia edo bainua goiko pieza gabe hartzen duten emakumezkoak: gutxi(ago), baina badira. Ez da «betidaniko» araua ere, ez eta «betirakoa». Gizarte-arauak aldatu egiten dira aldian behin. Aldatzen ez diren artean arau dira ordea: guztiok dakigu leku eta aldi jakineko norma soziala zein den eta, oro har, norma horretara biltzen gara gehienok gure eguneroko jardunean. Laburbilduz: gizarte-araua «arau» da, bizirik dirauen artean.

taberna eta denda, eliza eta herriko plaza, aisialdia eta kirol-gunea, eskola eta (ahal den heinean) lan-esparrua. Horietan euskara nagusi baldin bada, *arnasgune betean* gaude. Aldiz, hortik herrenka hastean *arnasgune bete* izateari uzten zaio, *arnasgune erasan* bihurtuz. Erasate-lan hori areagotu egiten bada nabarmen, horren ondorioz sortzen den moldaera berria ez da *arnasgune*.

Berririo esango dugu, funtsezko kontua baita hau: demolinguistika aldetik jaun eta jabe da euskara arnasgunean. Euskaraz jakiteaz gainera *euskaraz ari izaten dira*, *eguneroko mintzajardun arruntari dagokionez*, jaiotzaz edo geroko etorreraz (ezkontzaz, lanbidez,..) bertan bizi diren herritar guztiak edo gehienak. Hiztun horiek «bere kabian» sentitzen dira arnasgunean: euskarazko jardun arruntari dagokionez esparru geoterritorial «segurua» dute arnasgunea. Euskaldunak euskaldunekin herri-giroan euskaraz bizi diren lekua, euskara «etxeko nagusi» sentitzen den eremua. Inork behartu, xaxatu edo eraso gabe bizi dira bertan euskaraz. Arnasgunea ez dute hizkuntzagatiko gatazka-leku; besterentzat ere ez da, normalean, aparteko arazo-iturri soziolinguistiko. Barruko edo kanpoko inork ez ditu eguneroko jardun arruntan euskaraz egitera behartzen. Hori esijitzen du gizarte-arau zabal den normak, hori da normala. Era berean, eta oro har, kanpokoek ez dituzte xaxatzen edo erasotzen herrian euskaraz bizi direlako. Bertako haurrek, neska-mutilek eta gaztetxoek bere osoan (aski era betean) eskuratzen dute gurasoen hizkuntza⁴. Darabilten hizkera-modu horren barne-osaera eta beren mintzagaitasun-moldea aldatuz doaz hainbatean, baina bertako neska-mutilek, gazteek eta sasoikoek euskaraz egiten dute beren artean nagusiki: etxekoekin, lagunekin eta herritarrekin euskaraz bizi dira normalean, hitzezko jardun arruntari dagokionez⁵.

Aurrera begirako ondorio argiak ditu gertakari horrek, estatistikoki: a) bikote euskalduna egiten dute bertako gazte gehienek eta, horrela, herrian bertan (edo inguruko beste arnasguneren batean) asentatuz euskal familia sortzen dute maiz: hiztun-elkartearen jarraipen-bermea, belaunez belaun eguneratu beharrekoa, da familia-giro euskalduna sortze hori. Herriko lagunarteak eta gizarte-bizitzak (eta, ahal dela, lan-esparruak) zurkaiztu egiten du euskarazko jardun-gune hori.

4. Ekarpen zoragarriak eginik ditu gai honetaz, inoiz aipatu izan dugunez, Nancy Dorian-ek.

5. Hizkuntza-ukipenaren eragina indartuz doa arnasguneetan ere, oro har. Erdal hitzez gainera esamolde asko eta asko etxekotzen ari dira herriko gazte(txo)enean artean. Are perspektiba zabalagoan koka liteke fenomeno hori. Zerainean Elena Mendizabalek eta biok zenbait urtez egin genuen azteraldiaren argitan (ikus urte haietako *Xaguarde* aldizkaria), (orduko) 60 urtetik beherako belaunaldiak galera nabarmena ageri zuen 70 urtetik gorakoan aldean, baserri-munduari loturiko hitz-altxorrari dagokionez. Erdarak gero eta nabarmenago erasanik ere, ordea, euskaraz egiten dute beren artean Zeraingo heldu eta gazte gehienek. Nagusitasun-moldaera hori da kontua, hemen axola diguna.

b) Euskararen nagusitasun-moldaera⁶ argi horri eskerrak, arnasgunean ez dago *eus > erd* mintzaldaketa⁷ zabalik. Are gutxiago galera osoa⁸. Belaunez belauneko jarraipena inon baino seguruago bermaturik dago hor.

Eguneroko mintzajardun arruntari dagokionez, hortaz, osasun oneko hiztun-elkarteetan normal dena normal da arnasgunean. Ama-hizkuntzaren *belaunez belauneko jarraipena* da osasun oneko hizkuntza bizien iraupen-bide nagusia. Hori da osasun oneko hiztun-elkarte orok ahuldutako hiztun-elkarteen aurrez aurre duen bereizgarri soziolinguistiko nagusietarikoa: hainbatentzat nagusia. Ama-hizkuntzaren *belaunez belauneko jarraipena* sendo dago gure arnasguneetan: beste inon baino sendoago. Funtsezko ezaugarria da hori: perspektiba geoterritorialari dagokionez arnasguneetan bakarrik gertatzen zaigun ezaugarria. Aparteko antolamendurik gabe ikasten dute arnasguneetako haurrek euskaraz egiten. Eskolara joan aurretik euskaldun trebe izan ohi dira: jakitez eta, batez ere, egitez trebe. Jakitez elebakar edo euskal-elebidun; egitez guztiak edo gehienak euskaldun (konparatiboki) garbi. Euskal eskolarik gabe, are erdal eskolaz, *belaunez belaun* eta menderik mende euskaraz bizi izan dira. Orain ere gutxi fio. Lagungarri ederra dute gaur egun, hori bai, eskola: a) egunaren zati ohargarria (% 16 inguru) euskaraz betetzen dute neska-mutilek, maisu-maistrekin eta eskolagunekin; b) euskaraz irakurtzen eta idazten ikasten dute, lehen ez bezala; c) herriko euskararen erregistro informal-intimoez gainera hizkuntzaren aldaera jaso-formalaz baliatzen ikasten dute hainbatean; d) erdara (gaztelania eta, partez, ingelesa) ikasten dute orobat (ik. Zalbide, 2016). Lehen ez bezala, alde dute orain eskola. Alde eta, gizarte berri honetan, oso beharrezko. Hizkuntzaren geroa ez du ordea, arnasguneetan ere, batez ere eskolak bermatzen⁹. Mintzajardun arruntaren

6. Hizkuntza-soziologiaren alorreko «dominance configuration» delakoa (ez Uriel Weinreich-en 1953ko formulazio psikolinguistikoa) dugu hemen gogoan. Ikus, adibidez, Fishman, Joshua A., Robert L. Cooper, Roxana Ma etab., 1968: *Bilingualism in the Barrio (The measurement and description of language dominance in Bilinguals)*. Bertako perspektibatik ikus, adibidez, Zalbide 2009 eta 2016.

7. Alemanezko *Sprachverschiebung*, ingelesezko *language shift* edota gaztelaniazko *desplazamiento lingüístico* dugu gogoan, *luze-zabaleko mintzaldaketa-z* dihardugunean. Bertako perspektibatik ikus adibidez Zalbide 2001, 2002 eta 2016.

8. Terminologia teknikoari, eta hartatik eratoritzen den kontzeptu-lanketari dagokionez ikus, adibidez, alemanezko *Sprachverlust* eta, batez ere, ingelesezko *language loss* bere (zati-)sinonimo ugariekin: perspektiba gradual batetik hor daude, besteak beste, *language attrition*, *language obsolescence*, *language loss* eta *language death*.

9. Bat dator ondorio etsi hori mundu zabaleko hainbat gertaera konprobatuekin. Austriako Estirian bizi diren esloveno-hiztunen kasuaz, esate baterako, Vienako unibertsitateko K. Prochazka-k eta G. Vogl-ek ondorio hau ateratu dute berrikitan, *Diffusionsphysik* delakotik hartutako metodoaz: «The simulation shows that other habitat conditions (the language of schools, and in parishes) are of minor influence» (azpimarra gurea). Iturria: K. Prochazka-k eta G. Vogl, 2017: Quantifying the driving factors for language shift in a bilingual region. PNAS 114(17), DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1617252114. Ikus orobat Eva Obermüller: «Welche Sprache in Schulen oder Gemeinden offiziell gesprochen wurde, hatte zumindest laut den Berechnungen kaum Einfluss auf die Entwicklung» (azpimarra gurea). Iturria: Eva Obermüller, «Warum Sprachen verschwinden».

eguneroko erabilera-espektro zabala¹⁰ da, beti eta nonahi, osasun oneko hiztun-elkarteetan arau nagusi. Hori da munduko hizkuntza bizi-sendo guztien jarraipen-bide normala, belaunez belaun bere buruari eusten diona eta, eten-urratze larririk ezean, menderik mende irauten duena. Jarraipen-bide horri sendo eusteak lehentasun argia du, ahuldutako hizkuntza bizirik gordetzeko eta, hortik abiatuz, ahuldutako hiztun-elkartea bere osoan indarberritzeko. Gune horiek dira, hainbat adituren ustean (ikus bereziki, bertako eta mundu zabaleko perspektibak uztartuz, S. Altube¹¹ eta J. Fishman), ahuldutako hizkuntza indarberritzeko saio arrakastatsu ororen abiaburu nagusia eta sostengu gotorrena. Ingurumen horiek galtzen badira, askoz zailagoa da handik aurrerako biziberritze-saioa.

Beste zenbait ezaugarri. Arnagune beteak eta erasanak

Goiko elementuek definitzen dute aski zorrotz arnaguneak zer diren. Ezer gehiago esan al liteke horretaz? Nolakoak dira arnaguneak, hemen eta orain? Honako zertzelada hauek erantsi behar zaizkio, gure ustez, goiko definizio- eta azalpen-saioari.

- a) *Ingurumen geoterritorialak, ez soziofuntzionalak edo birtual hutsak*, dira arnaguneak: eguneroko mintzajardun arruntean (erabat edo batez ere) euskaraz bizi diren auzoak, herrixkak, herriak, herriarteak eta, inoiz (gero eta bakanago), eskualde osoak.
- b) Biztanle-kopuruz txikiak edo oso txikiak dira arnaguneak, eta lurralde-antolamenduaren aldetik aski periferikoak oro har. Hiribururik edota 50.000 biztanletik gorako hiririk ez dago, aspaldian, arnaguneen sailean. Herribururik bai: Azpeitia da gaur egun, askogatik gainera, herriburuen artean arnagunerik handiena.
- c) Gipuzkoan daude, egungo egunean, arnagune gehienak; Bizkai-Nafarroetan ere badira zenbait, dena den. Aldiz hortik kanpora oso herri gutxi dira arnagune, eta gutxiok ere aski duda-mudazko dira (Arabian Aramaio?, Iparraldean Baigorri ingurua?).

science.ORG.at (2017ko martxoaren 14an argitara emana). Ahuldutako hizkuntza eskola bidez bizirik eusteko edo indarberritzeko saioen emaitza ahularen ondorio etsi hori bat dator, orobat, mintzaldaketari buruzko teorizazio-saio landuenekin. Ikus horretaz, besteak beste, Fishman-ek eskolaren eragin mugatuari buruz behin eta berrito esandakoak: ikus Fishman 1991 (artikulu horren aurrekaria euskaraz ere bada: Fishman 1990).

10. Umetan eta gazte(txo)tan batez ere etxean, auzoan, lagunartean, parkean, kalean, eskolan, kirolgintzan eta ikus-entzunezko zabalbideetan. Helduaroan, horrezaz gainera, lan-munduan eta harreman-sare gero eta zabal-ugariagoetan, aurrez aurre edo birtualki.

11. Ikus, batez ere, funtsezko artikulu hauek: «La vida del euskera» eta «Más sobre la vida del euskera», zehaztapenak bibliografia atalean.

- d) Arnasguneak «irla» edo «uharte» bihurturik daude egungo egunean: ez dago Bizkaitik Nafarroara hedatzen den arnasgune zabalik, Gipuzkoa erdian harturik. XIX. mendetik aurrera zabalduz joandako, eta egungo egunean ia erabat buruturiko, mintzaldaketa biziaren ondorio da euskal mintza-esparru gotorraren zatikatze hori: jende gehien bizi den hiri(buru)ak, industria-gune handi(en)ak, trenbide- eta karretera-lotune nagusiak eta administrazio-gune operatiboak erdaldundu ziren lehenik, ordura arte arnasgune izandako eskualde zabaletan¹², eta bazter-fenomeno bihurtuz joan ziren horregatik, perspektiba geoterritorialtik ere, arnasguneak.

Eguneroko bizimodu arruntean «erabat edo nagusiki» euskaraz egite horrek ez du esan nahi, inondik inora, euskal hiztun-elkartearen espazio geoterritorial osoa (euskal hiztun-herria, horren arabera Euskal herria) bitan banatzen denik: batetik *arnasguneak*, bestetik *arnasgune* ez diren auzoak, herriak eta eskualdeak. Formulazio dikotomiko hori baino ondotoz bihurriagoa da azken hamarkadotako mapa soziolinguistikoa. Arnasgune gotorrenetik hasita (ia) erdara hutsezko mintza-esparrura bidean *continuum* luzea dago, eta tarte-bitarte luze horretan bizi gara euskaldun gehienok. Beraz, eta labur bilduz, *continuum* horren punta-mutur batean, ez tarte-bitarte luzean, daude arnasguneak: punta-muturrik euskaldunenean.

Punta-mutur batean egonik ere, arnasgune guztiak ez dira zeharo uniforme, molde bakarreko eta berdina; guztiak ez dira, bereziki, «euskal gotorleku huts». Euskaltasun handieneko ingurumen geoterritorial horretan ere barne-bereizbide argia dago: azpi-*continuum* nabaria. Guztiak ez dira gotortasun-maila bereko. Aldea dago arnasgune batzuetatik besteetara. Arnasgune hitza ez da, horregatik, zenbaitetan aski: termino ahula da, batez ere, arnasgune batzuetatik besteetara dagoen (gero eta nabariagoko) aldea gordin markatu behar denean.

Bitan edo hirutan banatu ordez lautan edo gehiagotan ere sailkatu litezke arnasguneak, segun zer barne-aldakortasun mota aztertu nahi den. Oraingoz ez diegu irabazi handirik ikusten sofistikazio handiagoko azterbideei: biko eta hiruko banaketaz analizatuko dugu beraz, gaurkoan, arnasguneen egungo (eta begien bistako) errealitate aldakor-komplexua.

12. Gipuzkoan, Eguren aintzakotzat hartu behar bada, arnasgune genuen Gipuzkoa gehiena XIX. mendearen erdialdean. Badago motiborik, halere, Egurenen deskribapen zorrotza beste zenbait testigantzarekin konparatu behar izateko.

II. Zer ez dira arnasmune, partez edo osoz?

II.1. Udalerrri euskaldunak ez dira, beti eta nonahi, arnasmune

Gauza biak batera joan litezke, eta maiz samar hala gertatzen da, baina ez dira baliokide huts. Bi gauza dira, formulazio teorikoz zein aplikazio praktikoz, *arnasmuneak* eta *udalerrri euskaldunak*. Bateratsu erabili ohi ditugu maiz, hizkera arruntean eta azalpen landuagoetan, baina bata eta bestea ez dira gauza bera, beti eta nonahi. Ondoko puntuotan daude, gure ustez, bien arteko berezitasun nagusiak.

- a) Definizio operatibo berezia dute, hasteko, batak eta besteak. Udalerrri euskaldunak identifikatzeko orduan herritarren mintzagaitasuna hartzen da oinarri: herritar gehienek ba al dakite euskaraz? Gutxieneko langa ezartzen duen portzentaje jakina definitzen da hor, operatiboki, *udalerrri euskaldun bai* ala *udalerrri euskaldun ez* erabakitzeke: demagun % 80ko langa¹³. Herritar guztiek edo gehienek beren artean euskaraz egiten duten ala ez, aldiz, ez da *udalerrri euskaldunen* definizio operatiboan espresuki kontuan hartzen: bistan da euskaraz jakitea eta euskaraz egitea ez dabiltzala arras urruti, herritarrek (guztiek edo gehien-gehienek) euskaraz jakin behar baitute beren artean euskaraz egiteko. Euskaraz jakiteak ez du, ordea, euskaraz egitea ondorioztatzen: ez ahoz eta ez, bereziki, idatziz. Herritarren eguneroko mintzajardun arruntak erabakitzen du, aldiz, ingurumen geoterritorial bat *arnasmune* den ala ez: etxean eta auzoan, kalean eta lagunartean, bertako gizarte-bizitzan oro har euskaraz egiten al da, erabat edo nagusiki? Baiezkotan, ingurumen hori *arnasmunea* da; bestela ez. «Gehienetan ez dute egiten, konforme, baina jakin badakite» esateak ez du balio. Herritar (gehienek) gehienek egin behar dute euskaraz, arnasmune izateko: ez ezinbestean nonahi eta noiznahi, ez interakzio guzti-guztietan nornahi delarik ere solaskidea¹⁴.

13. Iñaki Lurrebasoren lana da honetan guztian, gure ustez, definizioz argiena eta aplikazio-ahalmenez lagungarriena.

14. Erdaldun bat herrira etortzen denean (turista moduan, egun pasa), esate baterako, erdaraz egiten zaio. Horrek ez du, ezinbestean, eguneroko mintzajardun arrunta itzulipurdikatzen. Besterik da erdaldun asko sarri (herriko tabernak, plaza-ingurua eta are bertako jolas-parkeak zabal okupatuz, zer esanik ez bertara bizi izatera) etortzen direnean.

Bai, ordea, eguneroko mintzajardun arruntaren ohiko leku, situazio eta harreman-sare nagusietan. Batez ere hitzez egin behar dute euskaraz¹⁵.

- b) *Udalerri euskaldunak* «udalerri» dira neurriz, berez eta ezinbestean: halaxe definiturik daude. *Arnasguneak* ere «udalerri» izan litezke neurri-hedaduraz, baina ez dute ezinbestean udalerri izan beharrik. Hortik gorako neurria ere izan lezakete arnasguneek¹⁶: demagun Urolako erdi- eta behealde gehiena (Azpeitia ingurutik Zumaia aldera), edota Leitzza-Areso-Berastegi-Eldua(in)-Berrobi herri-sorta. Udalerri-mailatik beherako neurri-hedadura duen ingurumena ere izan liteke arnasgune, horren adibide seguru eta errazik eskueran ez daukagun arren: Amorebietako Etxano-Duda-Epaltza-Alakao-Arrinda auzoaldea baliagarri ote da ikuspegi hori argitzeko?
- c) Gehienetan deskriptiboa bada ere udalerri euskaldunen ikuspegia, perspektiba zinetikorik ere izaten du hainbatean: euskaraz dakitenen portzentajea gora doan, bere hartan dirauen ala behera datorren analizatzen da maiz, halakoetan. Aldiz, bere ardatza eguneroko jarduera arrunta duenez beste aztergai honetan zentratzen da arnasguneen kontzeptu-lanketa: eguneroko jarduera arrunt hori belaunez belaun sendo transmititzen ari den, ala galduz doan.

Labur bilduz: hizkuntza-gaitasunean zentratutako analisi demolinguistikotik abiatzen da nagusiki udalerri euskaldunen definizio operatiboa; bertako biztanle guztietatik zenbatek euskaraz dakien, eta portzentaje hori adin-taldez talde nola bilakatzen ari den: hori izaten da bere aztergai nagusia. Hizkuntza-soziologiaren elementu teoriko hauetan oinarritzen da nagusiki, aldiz, «arnasgune» kontzeptua: a) eguneroko mintzajardun arruntan eta, mintzajardun zabal-nagusi horren ondorioz, b) jarduera horren belaunez belauneko jarraipenean. *Udalerri euskaldunek* bestelako definizio operatiboa dute, eta bestelako aplikazio praktikoa. Horregatik, *arnasgune* guztiak *udalerri* (edo auzo zein eskualde) *euskaldun* dira baina *udalerri euskaldun* guztiak ez dira, hemen eta orain, *arnasgune*.

Bi gauza izateak ez du esan nahi arras diferente eta bateraezin direnik. Besterik erakusten digu errealitateak: aurrerago azalduko denez *udalerri*

15. Idatzizko interakzioa indartuz doa, dena den, belaunaldi gazteenetan batez ere. Idatzizko interakzioa ere eguneroko jardun arruntaren sailera hurbiltzen ari da beraz, hori dela medio. Alde handia dago ordea, oraindik, plano bien artean. Erdarazko «periodikua leituz ilustratzen da» orain ere, maiz aski, herriar euskaldun asko. Zer esanik ez dokumentazio ofiziala edo lan-esparrukoa tarteko direnean.

16. Garai batean, duela 150 urteko Gipuzkoan, Eguren-en aitormena erabat oker ez badabil, eskualde osoak genituen arnasgune: ia probintzia osoa, hiriburua eta zenbait herriburu alde batera utzita. Oraindik ere antzematen da izarraitzen eta Hernioren gerri-bueltan euskal giro bizi(ago)ko *continuum* bat, udalerri hutsetik harantzago doana. Baita Aizkorri-Aloña mendikatearen inguruko hainbat herri(xka)tan ere.

euskaldunak eta *arnasguneak* ez dabilta, hainbat kasutan, elkarrengandik batere urruti. Baina ez dira gauza bera eta, zenbait kasutan, tarte handia dago batetik bestera.

II.2. Arnasguneak ez dira «euskaldun gehienak bizi diren lekua»

Biztanlez txiki dira arnasguneak: gehienak oso txiki. Txikitasun hori dela medio, euskaldun gehienok (euskaraz dakigunon hiru laurdenak baino gehiago) ez gara arnasguneetan bizi. Egunean zehar erdaraz baino maizago (edo erdaraz bezain maiz) euskaraz egiten dugun hiztun gehienok ere ez gara, antza, arnasguneetan bizi. Arnasguneak aski elementu sekundario dira, beraz, mintzagaitasunean oinarrituriko hiztun-elkarte osoaren kopuru-perspektiba hutsetik. Hizkuntza indarberritzeko saioa ezin da hortaz, inola ere, arnasguneetara mugatu. Baina kontuz: kopuruz sekundario edo periferiko izanik ere, zentral-zentralak dira arnasguneak. Zentraltasun hori ez dago gaitasun linguistikoaaren plano demolinguistiko-kuantitatiboan, beste bi puntuotan baizik: a) eguneroko mintzajardun arruntaren euskal nagusitasunean, eta b) hiztun-multzo trinkoen belaunez belauneko transmisio betean.

Kontzentrazio demografiko handiaren eta «betidaniko gizarte-ohitura»-ren eraginez eguneroko mintzajardun arruntan euskara hain bizi egoteak eta mintzajardun horren belaunez belauneko jarraipen-bermeak, ez euskaraz «dakiten» hiztunen kopuru-portzentaje hutsak, ematen die arnasguneei aparteko garrantzia. Euskaraz dakien jende gehiena ez da, urrundik ere, arnasguneetan bizi. Bertan bizi direnek dute ordea, askogatik, euskarazko jarduna bizien, osasuntsuen eta, horrenbestez, gerora transmitigarrien. Ikus, aurreraxeago, S. Altubek eta J. A. Fishman-ek horretaz esandakoa.

II.3. Euskarak presentzia nabarmena¹⁷ duen hainbat instantzia (tartean zenbait gotorleku) ez da, definizioz, *arnasgune*

Ondoko instantzia edo gotorleku hauek ez dira, eta definizioz ezin dira izan, *arnasgune*: a) euskarazko eskola-sarea (nagusiki D eredukoa), euskarazko unibertsitate-atalak eta euskaltegiak; b) euskarazko komunikabideak: *Euskadi Irratia*, *Euskal Telebista*, *Berria*, *Argia*, *Herria* etab.; c) Herri Aginteetako atal elebidunak, Euskara Zerbitzuak etab.; d) euskarazko kultura-kontsumora

17. Zer da, hemen eta orain, nabarmena?: zenbaitetan nagusia, inoiz erabatekoa.

bideratutako hainbat ekimen: euskal liburu- eta disko-azokak, euskal antzerki-, kantu- eta dantza-taldeak, etab.; e) euskaltzale-elkarteak eta euskararen aldeko ekimenak: *Kilometroak*, *Korrika* etab. Instantzia horiek ez dira *arnasgune*: herriko biztanle guztien multzo nagusia hortik kanpora bizi da urtean zehar, eguneko ordu gehienetan; hiztun horien eguneroko mintzajardun arrunta bideratzen duten harreman-sare zabal-etengabeak instantzia horietatik kanpora daude nagusiki; hizkuntzaren belaunez belauneko jarraipenaren kate luzea (35-40 urtera artekoa) instantzia horiek baino jardun-gune zabal eta basikoagoetan oinarritzen, hezurramitzen, elikatzen, osatzen eta garatzen da hiztun-elkarte osasuntsu orotan.

Eguneroko bizimoduan erdara nagusi (zenbaitetan jaun eta jabe) den ingurumenetan (normalean kale-giroan) euskal gotorleku izatera iristen da goiko instantzia horietariko zenbait: horrelakoa da, bereziki, EAEko (eta, zein bere neurrian, Nafarroako eta Iparraldeko) eskola-mundua. Garrantzi ohargarria dute instantzia horiek, dudarik apurrena ez dago horretan, euskara indarberritzeko. Ezin baztertuzkoak dira, bakoitza bere alorrean eta bere heinean, euskal hiztun-talde askori bizirik eusteko eta beren eguneroko harreman-sareak nabarmen indartzeko. Arnasgune gehienen eta bestelako ingurumen askoren osagai sendo eta balios dira hortaz, sarri, gotorleku horiek; hala dira, bereziki, eskola-esparrua eta beste zenbait ingurumen soziofuntzional. Lagungarri ederrak ditugu hortaz gotorlekuok, banaka zein taldean harturik, ahuldutako hizkuntza indarberritzeko orduan. Baina instantzia guztiok (tartean gotorleku nagusiok) ez dira arnasgune, eta ezin dira izan. Ez dira eguneroko mintzajardun arruntaren iturburu nagusi, oinarri beregain eta iraunkor¹⁸. Ez dira belaunarte osoa bere baitan duten biziguneak: adin-tarte jakineko kideak oso gailen dira bertan, eta bestelakoak ahul edo hutsal. Ez dira belaunez belauneko jarraipenaren berme-iturri. Arnasguneak badira hori guztia, hein ohargarrian¹⁹; beste instantziok (are gotorleku sendoenok) ez. Instantzia soziofuntzional horiek gotorleku izatera iristen badira ere zenbaitetan, instantziok ez dira eguneroko mintzajardun arruntaren oinarri zabal eta iraunkor; are gutxiago belaunez belauneko jarraipenaren berme-iturri beregain. Instantzia edo gotorleku horiek «arnasgune soziofuntzional» bailiran azaltzea, nahasmendua sortzea da gure ustez. Arnasguneek hain berea eta hain

18. Demagun gotorleku-instantzia indartsu eta zabalduena: eskola-mundua. Eskolatik kanpora (maizenik eskolara joan aurretik) ikasten dute ikasle gehienek hitz egiten (etxean eta familiaretan, auzoan eta haur-parkean, lagunartean eta jolasean,...). Are gehiago: (oro har 16 edo 18 urtera arte, unibertsitate bidetik doazenean are beranduago arte) irauten duen eskola-aldi luzean ere eskolatik kanpora pasatzen dituzte esna-ordu gehienak (askogatik gehienak). Eskola-aldia amaitutakoan, are nabarmenagoa da eskolaz kanpoko bizimoduaren pisua eta eragina.

19. Hala izan dira belaunez belaun eta menderik mende. Orain ere halatsu dira, aski erasanik ez dauden heinean.

noraezekoa duten eguneroko mintzajardun arruntaz, hiztun horien kontzentrazio demografikoaz, hartarako oinarri geoterritorialaz, ingurumen horretako barne-sare trinkoez eta, hori guztia dela medio, ama-hizkuntzaren belaunez belaun transmititzeko ahalmen beteaz ahazturik bestelako instantzia soziofuntzional horiei «arnasmune» deitzea kontzeptuaren jatorrizko adiera, orain ere behar-beharrezkoa, desnaturalizatzea da.

III. Zergatik dira arnasmuneak hain garrantzitsu, euskara indarberritzeko?

Esana dugu dagoeneko, populazio-espektroari dagokionez herri-herririka txikiak direla arnasmune gehienak, ia guztiak. Baditu horrek, hemen eta orain, bere ondorioak: demolinguistikazko analisiek argi erakusten dutenez, euskaldun gehienok arnasmuneetatik kanpora bizi gara egungo egunean²⁰. Euskalgintzaren aktibazio-gune gehienak arnasmuneetatik kanpora daude orobat: administrazio-atal elebidun nagusiak, euskarazko komunikabideak, argialetxeak, unibertsitate-erakin eta ikergune gehienak, antzerki- eta musika-talde euskaldunak... horiek eta beste hainbat arnasmuneetatik kanpora daude oro har. Alde askotatik bazter-fenomenoa dira arnasmuneak, ez gizarte-bizitzaren berrikuntza-habi.

Txikiak, gutxi eta bazter-girokoak izanik, zergatik dira hain garrantzitsu? Euskalgintza sendo-asmozkoak ez ote luke euskaldun gehienon habitat nagusietan, XXI. mendearen euskarri diren hiriburu eta konurbazio gero eta zabalagoetan, zentratu behar? Ez ote da zentzuzkoago gehiengoari kasu egitea, hoberenean ere gainbehera datozen ingurumen geoterritorial txiki-zipriztindu horiek, eta bertako herritarren beharrak eta gogoak gero(xeago)ko uztea? Ezezkoan gaude. Hona zergatik:

- a) Eguneroko euskal mintzamolde «normala», osasun oneko hiztun-elkarteen mintzajardun arruntaren antzekoena, **hor** (arnasmuneetan) dago indar betean. Indar betean edo, zehazkiago esanik indarririk beteenean: askotan **hor bakarrik**. Euskaraz egiten da **hor**, erabat edo nagusiki, etxean eta kalean, lagunartean eta tabernan, auzoan eta herriko plazan, eskolan eta udaletxean. Euskara da nagusi, hitzez behintzat, gizarte-giro zabalean (jai-ospakizun eta auzolan, elizkizun eta parkeko jolasaldi, kultura-ekimen eta eztabaida politiko, kirol eta bertso-saio). Lanean ere bai partez, inon baino maizago.

20. Hori bakarrik ez: arnasmuneetako herritar asko «arnasmunetik kanpora» bizi da hein ohargarri batez: gero eta «arnasmunetar» gehiagok handik kanpora egiten du lan; kanpoan egiten ditu orobat erosketa gehienak, kanpoan egiten bere Batxilergo-, Lanbide Heziketa zein unibertsitate-ikasketak, handik kanpora burutzen aisialdiko hainbat ekimen, eta abar.

- b) Arnasguneetan bizi den jendeak bitxitasun-seinalerik edo salbuespen-markarik gabe egiten du euskaraz, bertan eta arnasgune horren hainbat ingurutan. Aparteko esfortzu, ordain-sari, autozentsura edo sakrifiziorik gabe egiten du euskaraz, hitzez ari delarik. Zergatik? Inon idatzi gabeko gizarte-arau honegatik: «hemen horrela egiten da». Ingurumen horietan «horrela egitea» agintzen du bertako gizarte-arauak. Indarrean dirauen artean, lege asko baino erabakigarriago da gizarte-arau edo norma sozial hori. Hizkuntzaren bizi-iraupenerako giltzarri den arau hori arnasguneetan bakarrik daukagu bizirik. Arnasguneetatik kanpora, espazio soziofuntzionalaren esparru jakinetan izan ezik (demagun erdara nagusi den hiriburu, hiri eta herrietako D ereduko irakasleen jarduna, eskola esparruan) aski zartaturik, indargabeturik eta maiz galdurik, dago norma sozial hori. Arnasguneetan bizirik dago, erabat edo hein handi batean, eguneroko bizimoduaren espazio nagusietan (etxean, auzoan, familian, lagunartean, plazan eta tabernan, mezetan eta udaletxean²¹, eskolako jolaslekuan eta frontoian, herriko festetan eta ezkontza-hiletetan,..) hitzez ari garelarik²² «euskaraz egitea» agintzen duen bertako gizarte-araua.
- c) Euskal hiztun-elkarte beregaina, eguneroko jardun arrunta euskaraz bideratzen duena, ingurumen horietan bizi-bizirik dagoela erakusten dute arnasguneek. Argi antzematen du hori edonork. Errespetu handia eragiten du euskarazko jardun arruntaren berezko bizitasun horrek, bai euskaltzaleon eta bai euskaltzale ez diren (bertako zein kanpoko) askoren artean²³. Euskaldunok euskaraz bizi garen espazio geoterritorialik izan badela erakustea funtsezko eginbeharra da, euskal hiztun-elkarteak etorkizunik izango badu. Arnasguneek azaltzen dute argien, euskaraz «normal» bizitzea zer den. Hizkuntza-normalkuntzaren bila bagabiltza, arnasgune horietan gaude osasun oneko hiztun-elkarteen eguneroko mintzajardun normaletik hurbilen. Gain-kostu txikienaz eta kritika-bide murritzenaz hor atera dakioke euskalgintzari, *bide batez* jardunik²⁴ batez ere, etekinik hoberena.

21. Herritarren eta udaleko arduradunen edo zerbitzarien arteko hizketaz ari gara, ez bertako langile apurren idatzizko jardun espezifikoaz. Arau nagusi izatera gutxitan iritsi den arren, bide batez esanik, idatzizko jardunean indartuz doa euskarazko administrazio-lana hainbat arnasguneetan.

22. Hitzez, ez idatziz, bideratzen dira hizkuntza (hots, hiztun-elkarte) osasuntsuetan eguneroko mintzajardun arruntaren interakzio horiek, erabat edo nagusiki.

23. Besterik da, oso, inoiz (zenbaitetan ez hain aspaldi) halakorik izanik dela eta bihar-etzi berriro ere halakorik izan ledin nahi dugula erreibindikatzeko. Eskubide oso-oso dugu euskaltzaleok gure amets hori erreibindikatzeko, baina «beste gauza bat» da hori. Erdal munduak lehen begi-kolpean antzematen du bien arteko aldea.

24. «Bide batezko» euskalgintzaren inguruan, ikus, orobat, Zalbide 2007.

- d) Euskaldun garbien sorgune oparoa da arnasmunea. Eguneroko bizi-pozak eta beldur-gorrotoak, esperantzak eta atsekabeak, bizi-giro informal-intimoaren gertaerak, pasadizoak eta gora-beherak aparteko graziaz eta hitz-etorri onez azaltzeko gai diren hiztun beteen sorburu eta agergune dira arnasmuneak. Funtsezko oinarri izan ohi da hori, hizkuntza formal-landuaren garapen-lanerako ere. Ez da batere harritzekoa, hortaz, euskal profesional asko (beraiek edo beren gurasoak) arnasmuneetatik etortzea. Bizi izatera kalera jaitsi badira ere profesional horietariko gehienak, arnasmuneen *background* horretatik datorkie euskal hizkuntzaz airoso, zalu eta dotore baliatzeko doai aparta. Hitz-etorri oneko euskaldun trebe landuen harrobi dira arnasmuneak. Altxor preziatua da hori, oso, ahuldutako hiztun-elkarteontzat²⁵.
- e) Eguneroko mintzajardun arruntean, euskara da arnasmuneetan nagusi. Bere lekua du hor ere erdarak (eskolan atzera egin du, baina aurrera doa lan-esparruan, turismoan, ikus-entzunezkoen kontsumoan,..). Erdara (gero eta nabarmenago) hor egonik ere, euskarazko mintzajardun arrunta da arnasmuneetan nagusi: mintzabide bakar, jaun eta jabe edo, gero eta maizago, soil-soilik nagusi. Kontuz: «soil-soilik nagusi» esatea distraigarri gerta liteke: eguneroko mintzajardun arruntari dagokionez hor bakarrik da euskara, herri edo eskualde mailan, nagusi. **Hor bakarrik.**
- f) Haur-gazte-helduen katean, jaiotzatik hasi eta 35-40 urtera arteko ibilbide luze-bihurrian, *eusk* > *erd* mintzaldaketarik ez da arnasmuneetan luze-zabal gertatzen ari. Migrazio bortitzik edo bestelako eten-urratze larririk gertatzen ez den artean, hortaz, belaunez belauneko transmisioa segurtaturik dago arnasmuneetan.

Labur bilduz: osasun-egoera onetik beste edozein ingurumen geoterritorial edo populazio-segmentu baino hurbilago daude arnasmuneak, plano kolektiboari dagokionez. Osasun bete-betean ez, baina beste inon baino osasuntsuago bai. Horregatik da hain noraezeko, horregatik da hain zentral eta ezin alboratuzko, arnasmuneetako nagusitasun-moldaera horri indar betean (ahalik eta indarrik beteanean) eustea. Ahuldutako hiztun-taldea indarberritu liteke, hildakoa ez. Hildakoa biziberritu egin liteke gehienik, ez indarberritu. Hiztunen eguneroko mintzajardun arruntean hilik dagoena biziberritzea askoz lan zailagoa da, ordea, ahulduta dagoena indarberritzea baino.

25. Atzerriko beste hainbat aditu (Weinreich 1953, Gal 1979 eta 1995; Riehl 2006; Knipf-Komlósi 2011 etab.) oso kontuan hartzekoak direlarik ere, Nancy Dorian-en ikerlanei arreta biziz begiratzea komeni da gure ustez «altxor» horren zenbatekoaz eta nolakoaz argi jabetzeko: ikus Dorian 1981, 1992 [1989], 2010 eta 2014. Etxekoetan hor dugu, berriro ere, Seber Altube (Altube 1920, 1929-1930, 1933 eta 1936). Altuberen ekarpenaz egoki jabetzeko ikus, besteren artean, Josemari Velez de Mendizabal 1979 eta 2000).

Ez gara ezer berririk esaten ari. Kanpoko eta etxeko hainbat adituk esandakoa errepikatzen ari gara funtsean. Ikus dezagun, laburzki, aditu horiek (horietariko zenbaitek, gure ustez adierazgarrienek) gai honetaz zer esan duten.

Arnasguneen garrantziaz kanpoko eta etxeko zenbait adituk esandakoa

Ondoko galdera hauei erantzuten saiatu izan den aditurik bada, kanpoan zein etxean: 1) ahuldutako hizkuntza indarberritu eta «bere onera» ekarri ahal izateko, zer behar da batez ere? 2) hiztun-elkarte batean hiztun batzuek baizik jarraitzen ez badute beren hizkuntza belaunez belaun transmititzen, nondik komeni da hiztun-elkarte hori berregiten hastea? Goazen atalez atal.

- 1) *Ahuldutako hizkuntza indarberritu eta «bere onera» ekarri ahal izateko, zer behar da batez ere?* Era askotako erantzunak eman izan zaizkio galdera honi²⁶: erantzun horien errepaso arin bat nahi duenak ikus beza, adibidez, Zalbide 2002. Aniztasun horretatik funtsezko planteamenduetara hurbildu nahirik, kanpoko eta etxeko aditu bi aukeratuko ditugu gaurkoan. Ez dira inondik inora bakarrak. Bai, ordea, ahuldutako hizkuntzak indarberritzeko orduan kontuan izan beharreko elementu nagusiez aski argi eta ozen mintzatu izan direnak eta, oro har, beste aditu askoren bide-erakusle gertatu direnak. Kanpokoen azalpenetan Joshua A. Fishman-en hitzak izango ditugu gogoan, eta etxekoetan Seber Altube hartuko dugu aipagai.

Kanpokoen artean honela mintzatu izan da Joshua A. Fishman, behin eta berriz, bere *Reversing Language Shift* edo HINBE-saioaren lehentasun-gunea azaltzerakoan: «the fulcrum²⁷ of the GIDS scale is commonly²⁸ stage 6» (Fishman, 2001, 467. or.). Bere «Stage 6» hori badakigu zein den:

26. Erantzun posible horietariko bat da, dudarik gabe, Altubek 1933an aipatzen duen hau: «Un buen patriota vasco (...) decía en una perorata lo que transcribo a continuación: “emoidazube neuri azkatasuna, euzkerearen azterrenik bape eztaukadala be, ta urte gitxi-barru euzkerea biurtuko dautzuben sendo-sendo, zindo-zindo, indartsu, bixirik. ¿Bakixube zer biar dodan mirari ori egiteko? Iztegi bat (*diccionario* bat) eta euskal-izti bat (*gramática* bat)”. Erro sakonak ditu ikusmolde horrek: ikus, adibidez, Sabino Aranak 1901ean Hendaian irakurritako hitzaldian egileak puntu-hutsunez emandako pasartea (Zalbide etab., 2003: XVI-XIX). Bistan da, nolana ere, Sabino bera izan zela, egun hartan bertan gainera, bide hori ezinezkoa izanik alternatiba egingarria planteatu beharra aldarrikatu zuena. Knipf-Komlósi, Elisabeth, 2011: «Wandel im Wortschatz der Minderheitensprache. Am Beispiel des Deutschen in Ungarn». *Zeitschrift für Dialektologie und Linguistik – Beihefte (ZDL-B)* Band 145. Budapest.

27. Adiera ezaguna du *fulcrum*, *fulcro* horrek: *gatzelaniaz sostén, puntal, punto de apoyo de la palanca*. Euskaraz *euskarria*.

28. Ahuldutako hizkuntzen maizeneko gizarte-egoera hobetzeko beharrian nagusiez mintzo da *commonly* horren bidez. Garbi dio, horrekin batera, *fulcrum* hori beste zerbait izan litekeela «for particular languages vis-à-vis particular functions that are being targeted in particular cases» (Fishman, 2001: 467).

«The intergenerational and demographically concentrated home-family-neighbourhood-community: the basis of mother-tongue transmission» (Fishman, 2001, 467. or.). Hots: etxean eta familian, auzoan eta kalean, giza arteko jardunean eta herri-bizitza zabalean nagusi izan behar du euskarak, zaharren eta gazteen artean nagusi, eguneroko mintzajardunari dagozkionetan. Gurea bezain ahul dauden hiztun-elkarteen kasuan jardun-esparru multzo hori segurtatzea da gainerako saioen euskarri nagusia.

Gatozen etxeko aditura: euskara indarberritu eta «bere onera» ekarri ahal izateko zer behar da batez ere? Bere aurreko edota bere garaiko hainbat herritarren iritzi-azalpenak landuz, sakonduz eta garatuz²⁹ erantzun hau emanik dio galdera horri Seber Altubek, duela laurogeita hamar urte inguru: «Para la restauración de un idioma, es necesario que una población compacta y bastante numerosa lo use íntegramente como habla propia e íntima suya. La propagación del lenguaje hablado se opera principalmente por expansión natural mediante el contagio oral (hoy es necesario además que vaya apoyada por medios artificiales o docentes), lo cual requiere indispensablemente la existencia, repetimos, de focos o centros de irradiación de cierto volumen y formación compacta (..) en los que viva el idioma a expandir su vida plena, lozana y arraigada» (Altube, 1936, 73. or.). (Letrakera etzana gurea. Bere ikusmoldearen sintesi-saiorako ikus Zalbide, 2016). Lehendik esana zuen Altubek, goiko pasarte horren atariko, beste hau: «la práctica familiar es (...) el medio eficaz o decisivo para el aprendizaje perfecto de un idioma, aprendizaje que se complementa y se consolida con el uso diario en las calles, plazas y demás lugares de reunión entre gentes de pueblo que hablan el mismo idioma» (Altube, 1933, 305. or.).

Bistan da aski elkarren eskutik ibiliak ditugula Altube eta Fishman, puntu honetan³⁰. Alde kronologiko argi batekin, halere: J. A. Fishman-ek baino ia 60 urte lehenago azaldu zuen bere ikuspegia S. Altubek (eta are hogeitaka urte lehenago S. Aranak). Egunen batean aurrez aurre heldu beharko zaio gerra aurreko hizkuntza-soziologiaren gai horri³¹, euskalgintzaren argi-ilunak nazioarteko perspektiban egoki kokatu eta zuzen baloratu ahal izateko.

- 2) Hiztun-elkarte batean hiztun batzuek baizik jarraitzen ez badute beren hizkuntza belaez belaez transmititzen, nondik komeni da hiztun-elkarte hori berregiten hastea?

29. Tartean, errazegi ahazten bada ere, Sabino Aranaren 1901ean Hedaian egindako hitzaldi sendoa eta haren ildotiko zenbait esaldi. Ikus Zalbide 2015.

30. Puntu honetan bakarrik ez. Beste gai bat da hori, dena den, eta oraingoz bere horretan utziko dugu.

31. Bada horretaz kontuan hartzeko saiurik: ikus bereziki Jose Manuel Odriozolaren 1992ko Gerraurreko gizarte-hizkuntzalaritza.

- 3) Eguneroko jardun arruntean beren «betiko mintzoa» alde batera utzi eta erdal hizkuntza nagusira mintzaldatu diren hiztun-talde gero eta ugariagoetatik (eta talde horiek bizi diren ingurumenetatik) ekin behar zaio bereziki indarberritze-saioari, ala eguneroko jardun arruntean euskaraz diharduen (gero eta urriagoko) hiztun-multzo trinkoenetatik? Bistan da «leku guztietatik ekitea» dela irtenbide hoberena, ahal izanez gero, kasuan kasuko indartze-bidea aplikatuz han-hemen. Inork ez du, dakigularik, orotariko bide gihartsu hori gaitzetsi eta gaitzesten. Lehentasunak lehentasun dira ordea edozein giza-jardunetan, banaka zein taldean: «Quien mucho abarca poco aprieta» urrezko arau da edonon. Hots, bide bat hartu behar izaten da maiz, guztia egin ezin delako sarri. Guzti-guztia egin ezin denean «guztia ona da» esatea itsu bezain antzu da. Hori horrela dela jakinik, non dago euskalgintzaren lehentasun-oinarria? Ahuldutako hizkuntzaren alde egin nahirik «gauza guztiak» egin ezin direnean, zer da hobe?

Hona Joshua A. Fishman-ek zer dioen³²:

An early **start before inter-generational mother-tongue transmission has ceased** to occur is worth more than tons of sage advice. **It is better and easier to foster informal life when it still exists. It is the hardest thing to create afterwards.** It is very hard to create, to program that which is essentially not programmed or programmable. At best, you can program situations that might facilitate it (Fishman, 2007 [1996]).

(Beltxezko letrakera etzana gurea).

Labur bilduz: indarberritze-saioen beste hainbat eginbehar ukatu edo gutxietsi gabe, bizirik dagoenari bizirik eustea da, Fishman-en esanean, eginkizunik artezena. «It is better and easier».

Zer dio honetaz Altubek? Hona bere azalpena:

Será necesario que cuidemos, con preocupación **primordial, la conservación** (..) **del** fuego sagrado del **euskera en las poblaciones** de alguna importancia **en que** aún **permanece vivo**, pues constituyen los últimos reductos de defensa, las últimas bases para una posible expansión futura (Altube, 1936, 73. or.).

(Beltxezko letrakera etzana gurea).

32. Ez da hori aldi bakarra, Fishman-ek gai honi aurrez aurre heldu izan diona. Bere laburrean aski argia da ordea, eta oraingoz honetara mugatuko gara.

Alde eta ñabardura asko antzeman litezke bien artean, jakina³³. Aldeak alde eta ñabardurak ñabardura, funtsezko ikuspegi-ardatza oso antzekoa dute ordea biek: eguneroko jardun arruntean euskaraz diharduen hiztun-multzo trinkotik (nahiago bada: trinkoenetatik) abiatzea komeni da. Arnasmuneak ditugu askogatik, egungo egunean, Fishman-en «intergenerational and demographically concentrated home-family-neighbourhood-community» jardungune-esparrua sendoen eta bizien duten ingurumen geoterritorialak. Arnasmuneetan bakarrik daukagu egungo egunean, erabat edo nagusiki, Altuberen «población compacta (...) (que) lo use íntegramente como habla propia e íntima suya». Euskara indarberritzeko saioetan lehenetsun argikoak dira hortaz, Fishman-en eta Altuberen esanean, arnasmuneak.

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33. Altuberen «poblaciones de alguna importancia» hori ez genuke besterik gabe gutxietsi behar. Neurritz kanpora atera ere ez: egoerak okerrera egin da nabarmen 1933–36tik, eguneroko mintzajardun arruntaren esparruan, eta arnasmuneetan ez dugu halako mugarik ezarri. Ezarriko bagenu, Azpeiti hutsarekin geratzeko arriskua genuke. Nork esan du, gainera, herri-herrixka txikiagoetako euskal mintzajardun bizijatorra Azpeitiko kalekoa baino hutsalagoa, intentsitate-balioz apalagoa, denik? Demolinguistika beti da garrantzitsu: Azpeiti moduko dozena t'erdi arnasmune bagenitu egungo egunean, mila bider osasuntsuago legoke gaur euskara. Ez ditugu, ordea: ez dozena t'erdi, ez hamar eta ez bost. Demolinguistika oso aintzakotzat harturik ere, alferrik da negar-zotinkako bide itsuetan barrera abiatzea.

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3. Komunitate bernakularrak babestea hizkuntza gutxituen biziberritzean: gizarte-analisi dinamiko bat

Conchúr Ó Giollagáin (University of the Highlands and Islands)

Laburpena: Artikulu honek hizkuntza-taldeen bizindar etnolinguistikoari (BE) buruzko ikuspegi bat proposatzen du, H1-hiztunen komunitateentzat, H2-sareentzat eta H2-ikasleentzat elkarren onurak sortzea helburu duena, hizkuntza-taldeen iraupenerako elkar indartzeko ziklo baten bidez. BEaren kontzeptualizazio berri honek errealitatean oinarritutako esparru integral batean du oinarria —Language Dynamics in Society (LanDS: Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2025) deritzoguna—, hizkuntzak gizarteetan nola bizi diren ulertzeko, edo iraunkortasun etnolinguistikoa eta mundu-mailako hizkuntza-aniztasuna mehatxatzen dituen krisi soziolinguistikoa deskribatzeko.

Azken hamarkadetan hizkuntzen sustapenerako ikuspegi akademiko eta ofizialak oztopo izan dira gutxiengo-hizkuntzen komunitate bernakularren babeserako. Egungo hizkuntza-politikaren eta plangintzaren zati handi batek, besteak beste, ez du kontuan hartzen —edo ukatzen du— gutxiengo-komunitate bernakularren gainbehera sozial orokortua. Haien gainbeherari erantzunez, artikulu honek honako hauek proposatzen ditu: a) gutxiengo-hizkuntzen egoera soziala interpretatzeko esparru teoriko berri bat, eta b) gutxiengo-hizkuntzen sustapenerako ikuspegi estrategikoa, komunitate bernakularren babes nahikoa bermatuz; hau da, gizarte-ikuspegitik esanguratsua den hizkuntza-biziberritzea garatzea.

BEaren kontzeptualizazio berri honek gutxiengo-hizkuntzen iraupena aztertzen du elkarreraginezko dinamika sozialaren ikuspegitik. Ikuspegi honetatik, BEak funtsezko lau garapen-fase ditu bere baitan: 1) lehen mailako sozializazioa; 2) bigarren mailako sozializazioa; 3) indartze zibikoa; eta 4) etnizazio koherentea, hau da, identitate kolektiboaren pertzepzioetan koherentzia eragiten duten prozesu soziopolitikoak. Fase horietan zehar —banaka zein kolektiboki— aurrera egitea funtsezkoa da hizkuntza-komunitate baten gizarte-iraunkortasuna garatzeko eta sendotzeko. Hortaz, hizkuntza-politika arrakastatsua hizkuntza-talde baten

gaitasun kultural, politiko eta instituzionalaren mende dago, estrategiak gizarte-aldaketaren presioekin, elkarreragin-prozesuekin eta hizkuntza-talde baten BEaren oinarri diren dinamika sozialekin lerrokatzeko.

Gako-hitzak: bizindar etnolinguistikoa, hizkuntza-babesa, LanDS esparrua, hizkuntza-sozializazioa, hizkuntza-indarberritzea, etnizazio koherentea, hizkuntza-biziberritzea, gutxiengo-hizkuntzen soziolinguistika bernakularra.

Sarrera

Arnasguneen inguruko hausnarketak gutxiengo bernakularren gizarte-inguruabarretara birbideratu du arreta, eta hori aurrerapauso garrantzitsua izan da. Bizindar etnolinguistikoaren (BE) gizarte-dimentsioen garrantzia azpimarratzea behar-beharrezko lehen urratsa da gutxiengo hizkuntza-politika eta -plangintzan (GutxHPP) gutxiengo bernakularren kezken lehenespena berrezartzeko. Horrek bizindar etnolinguistikoaren inguruko ikusmolde berezi bat eskatzen du, onura partekatuak ekarriko dizkiena H1-hiztunen komunitateei, H2-sareei eta H2-ikasleei talde linguistikoaren iraunkortasunerako ziklo iraunkor eta elkarrekiko indargarri batean. Ikuspegi soziologiko eta politiko batetik, hizkuntza gutxituen kezka etnolinguistikoekiko ikusmolde holistiko horretan aski sustraituta ez dauden aspirazio zibiko eta komunitarioak ezin dira sinesgarritzat jo GutxHPP gizartekoi gisa. Hortaz, hizkuntza gutxituen sustapen sinesgarria bermatzeko, GutxH edo hizkuntza gutxituen jatorrizko hiztunen komunitate bernakularren habitat soziala babestetik hasi behar da. Hizkuntza gutxituen eguneroko praktikaren testuinguru sozial-geografikoak eta haien kultura sozialak indartuz soilik eboluziona dezakete hizkuntza gutxituen sustapenak eta komunitate bernakularren babesak GutxHPP dinamiko eta «soziofuntzional» gisa (cf. Fishman, 2001, 673. or.).

BEaren inguruko gure ikusmoldea Language Dynamics in Society (LanDS) edo Hizkuntzaren Dinamika Gizartean (HizDG)¹ izeneko proiektuan oinarritzen da (Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2025). Horren bidez, HPP-agenda berrezartzen ahalegindu nahi dugu, eta arreta gizarte-dinamika konplexu batzuetan jartzen, zeinek eragin positiboa izan baitezakete hizkuntza-komunitateetan (eta iraunkortasun etnolinguistikoa bermatu) edota eragin kaltegarria (eta

1. Artikulu honen atal garrantzitsuenak jatorrizko «LanDS» artikuluan oinarritzen dira (Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2025: <https://sciendo.com/article/10.2478/tajes-2025-0002>). LanDS proiektuaren ikertaldean daude Conchúr Ó Giollagáin, Daniel Bourgeois, Brian Ó Curnáin, Iain Caimbeul eta Gordon Cameron. Gure jatorrizko artikulua BE markoen erreseina bibliografiko bat jasotzen du.

hauskortasun etnolinguistikoa eragin). Hauxe argudiatzen dugu: «BEa bermatzeko, ezinbestekoa da hizkuntza-talde batek bere gizarte-egonkortasunarentzat eta jarraitutasunarentzat erabakigarriak diren prozesu belaunaldiarteko, komunal/sozial, instituzional eta zibiko funtsezkoak babesteko eta biziberritzeko antolamendu-gaitasun kolektiboa izatea» (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2025, 26. or.).

HizDG markoa Joshua Fishman hizkuntza-politika eta -plangintza modernoaren sortzaile entzutetsuaren Reversing Language Shift (1991) edo Hizkuntzaren Indarberritzearen paradigmaren ondorengo gisa aurkezten dugu. Honetan datza HizDG markoaren garrantzia: Fishmanek BEa sustatzeko 1960ko hamarkadatik 2000ko hamarkadara bitartean egindako ekarpen baliotsuetan oinarritzen dela.

HizDG proiektuak, batetik, BEaren birkontzeptualizazio esanguratsu bat proposatzen du, eta, bestetik, osagai analitiko bat eskaintzen du ikuspegi berri hau lantzeko, zeinak H1-hiztunen dentsitate altuko komunitate bernakularrak iraunarazteak dituen erronketara birbideratzen baitu arreta. Birbideratze bernakular honen jatorria *Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the Gaeltacht* (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007) lanean aurkitzen da (2015ean eguneratu zen: Ó Giollagáin & Charlton, 2015). Lan horretako metodologia egokitu egin zen ondoren Eskoziako *Gaelic Crisis in the Vernacular Community* inkestarako (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2020). Irlanderarekin eta Eskoziako gaelikoarekin erabilitako metodologia soziolinguistikoa (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007, 2015, 2020) galesaren testuinguru bernakularrera egokitu zen ondoren, eta, horren ondorio gisa, BRO² kolaborazio soziolinguistikoa (2023-2027) ezarri zen galesaren eremu bernakularren inguruko inkesta egiteko. Gerora, irlanderaren eta Eskoziako gaelikoaren munduak eta galesarenak GutxHen kezka bernakularrak eztabaidatzeko izandako elkarriketa interkulturaleri esker, ikuspegi soziolinguistiko multikultural bat sortu zen Euskal Herrian Arnasguneen proiektua ezartzeko (2025).

GutxHPPa lantzeko ikusmolde holistikoak

GutxHPParen alorrean osotasuna eta osagarritasuna proposatzea, HizDG proiektuko ikusmolde holistikoan adierazi zen bezala, antidoto bat da gaur egungo HPP batzuetan (adibidez, Irlanderarentzako 20 Urteko Estrategian; Acht na Gaeltachta 2012 delakoan; 2025eko Eskoziako Hizkuntzen Aktan; Eskualdeetako

2. Cf. BRO: A Comprehensive Sociolinguistic Survey of Contemporary Welsh-speaking Communities | University of Wales eta https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-08/Prosiect%20BRO%20Compendium%20of%20Language%20Statistics%20based%20on%20Census%202021%20data_0.pdf (2025-09-29an kontsultatua).

eta Eremu Urriko Hizkuntzen Europako Gutunaren ebaluazio-irizpideen ezarpenean) gutxiengo linguistikoaren zaurgarritasunaz jarduteko nabari diren errezeloen aurrean. BE holistikoa garatzeko, gainera, beharrezkoa da alde batera uztea orain arte nagusi izan diren eta analitikoki antzuak diren zenbait diskurtso postestrukturalista, ez dutenak arreta nahikorik jartzen gutxiengo bernakularren kezketan. Hona hemen batzuk:

- Gutxiengoaren identitate-erronkak aniztasun, hibridotasun eta aldakortasun postmodernoa (adb. Blommaert, 2010).
- Hizkuntza gutxituetako *speakerhood* delakoaren osaera, tartean *new-speakerism* delakoa (adb. Smith-Christmas *et al.*, 2018).
- *Translanguaging* delakoa (adb. García & Wei, 2014).
- Paisaia linguistikoak (adb. Gorter, 2006).
- GutxHPParen kudeaketa sektoriala (adb. Williams, 2023; Spolsky, 2009)³.
- Mundu akademikoan GutxHen filologian jartzen den gehiegizko arreta, arrisku-egoeran dauden gutxiengo askoren erroka soziologiko, antropologiko, politiko eta soziolinguistikoak aztertzeke ikerketa-erakundeek garatu beharko luketen ikusmolde sistematiko baten kaltetan⁴.

Diskurtso horiek GutxHPP sinboliko gisa kategoriza litezke, eta ez GutxHPP gizartekoi gisa, zeina garrantzitsuagoa eta beharrezkoagoa baita. Izan ere, hizkuntza gutxituen kulturen gizarte-ezabapena saihesteko prospektibak, orain, gutxiengo horien ahalmenean dautza, beren habitataren babes soziala eta holistikoki diseinaturiko BE-estrategiak lortzera bideratutako GutxHPP gizartekoiak diseinatzeko eta ezartzeko dituzten baliabideetan eta gaitasun kolektiboan. Definizioz, GutxHPP sinbolikoak ondorio sinboliko edo instituzionalak ekoitz ditzake soilik, hau da, sustatze-ahaleginen emaitza ez-gizartekoiak. HPP gizartekoiak gizarte-zientzia errealean jartzen duen azpimarra, beraz, nahiko argi bereiz daiteke askotan GutxHPP sinbolikoa eta hura zilegitzen duten diskurtso akademikoak irudikatzen dituzten sentimendu indibidualista handinahi askotatik.

3. GutxHPPetan (testuinguru mendebaldarretan) ikusmolde sektorialista lehenesteak (hezkuntzako, hedabideetako, arteko eta administrazio publikoko sektoreetan) estatu-klase bitartekari bati egin dio mesede, eta dispensa formalak eman dizkio hizkuntza-sustapen postestrukturalistari, ez datozenak bat hizkuntza-talde baten bizindar etnolinguistikoarentzat oinarritzkoak diren gizarte-aldaketak, prozesu interaktiboak eta dinamika sozialek eragiten dituzten presioekin.

4. Ó Giollaigáin-ek (in press) sindrome hau eztabaidatzen du irlanderazko lan akademikoekin eta mundu akademikoarekin lotuta.

Beharrezkoa izan dakiguke aztertzea, halaber, ea Europako Gutunaren xedapenak ezartzeko alor akademikoan eta politikoan jarri den azpimarrak ez ote duen arreta desbideratu HPParen gizarte-ikuspegi zabalago batetik, eta ez ote duen alde batera utzi, besteak beste, GutxHen familia- eta gizarte-transferentzia, edota GutxHek hainbat gizarte-eremu eta -funtzioetan izan dezaketen nagusitasun-maila. Azken urteotan, gero eta gehiagotan ikusten dugu hizkuntzak positiboki ebaluatzen direla Europako Gutunak bizitasun sozial gutxi edo batere ez duten GutxHentzat ezarritako irizpideen arabera⁵. GutxHen bizindarra Europako Gutunak ezarritako alor sektorialen arabera ebaluatzeko modu burokratiko horrek, azkenerako, ahuldu egingo du Europako Gutunaren sinesgarritasun soziolinguistikoa. Zaila denez eguneroko bizimodu errealean Eskoziako gaeliko-hiztunek aurrera eramane beharreko borrorak argi adieraztea Europako Kontseiluak Eskoziako gaelikoaren inguruan egindako azken ebaluazioan, prozesua nahasgarria gertatzen da, ematen baitu zuhaitzek ez dutela basoa ikusten uzten. Ikuspuntu horretatik, badirudi Europako Gutuneko prozesuek zerbitzu-akordio bat monitorizatzen dutela, eta ez dituztela hainbeste ebaluatzen etnolinguistikoki desberdinak diren taldeen bizindarra sostengatzeko hil ala bizikoak diren kontuak. GutxHen gizarte-ikuspegitik begiratuta, hemengo analisi honek defendatzen du HPPen xedapen sektorialista ezarriek komunitate bernakular zaugarrien premiei erantzuteko modu desgizartetu bat eragin dutela, politika-gaiak ez direlako ongi egokitzen gutxiengoaren dinamika sozialen egungo errealitatearen funtsezko alderdietara.

Fishmanek (2001, 673. or.) ohartarazi zuen moduan:

Azalpen-saiakera teorikoki tolesgabeen [...] arazoa da ez dituztela gizarte-prozesuak xeheki deskribatzen edo ez daudela haiekin erlazionatuta, ez talde barruko elkarrekintzei dagokienez, ez talde arteko elkarrekintzei dagokienez, hau da, funtsean ez dira soziologikoak (eta, ondorioz, ez soziolinguistikokoak), eta ez daude erlazionatuta azterketa edo aplikazio zorrotzetan oinarritutako ezein ikerketarekin.

Horrek honako galdera hau eginarazten digu: zergatik ez duten Europako gutxiengo linguistikoen erronka bernakularrek merezi duten arreta jaso azken hamarkadetan. Irlandako eta Eskoziako gaelikoaren egoera aztertuz, ikusi dugu nola Gaeltacht eta Gàidhealtachd eremuetako (Irlandako gaelikoa eta Eskoziako gaelikoa hitz egiten diren eremuak, hurrenez hurren) hizkuntza-

5. Ikusi Europako Kontseiluak (2024) Europako Gutuneko adierazleetan oinarrituz Eskoziako gaelikoaren inguruan egindako azken ebaluazioa: Erresuma Batua positiboki ebaluatu zuen, nahiz eta gaelikoz mintzatzen diren komunitate bernakularren gainbehera sozialaren gizarte-froga argiak dauden (Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2020), cf. <https://rm.coe.int/united-kingdomecrml6-en/1680b1a73f>

pobretzearekin eta gaelikoz mintzatzen diren komunitate bernakularren gizarte-gainbeherarekin lotutako kontu erabakigarriak besterik gabe alde batera utziak edo ia guztiz saihestuak izan diren mundu akademikoan eta politikagintzan (cf. Ó Giollagáin & Ó Curnáin, 2024, Ó Giollagáin in press, 2025, eta Ó Giollagáin in press). Alabaina, ikuspegi soziolinguistiko zabalago batetik, merezi du honako galdera hau ere egitea: ea azkenaldiko diskurtso soziolinguistiko batzuek ez ote duten lagundu kezka bernakularrei lehentasuna kentzen hizkuntza gutxituen sustapenean. Bereziki HPPak 1990eko hamarkadaren bukaeran eta 2000ko hamarkadaren hasieran izandako biraketa identitarioaz geroztik (adibidez Heller, 1999, 2011), HPParen alorreko diskurtso batzuek GutxH-kulturen esperientzia indibidualizatuan jarri dute arreta, GutxH-kolektiboak sostengatzeak dituen dimentsio soziopolitiko eta gizarte-dimentsio zabalagoen kaltetan.

Lehenago argudiatu dugunez, gaur egun gutxiengo hizkuntza-politika eta -plangintzaren alorrean (GutxHPP) egiten diren ahalegin gehienak hizkuntza-komunitatea babesteaz aski arduratzen ez diren hizkuntza-sustapen gisa deskriba litezke (cf. Ó Giollagáin et al., 2025; Ó Curnáin & Ó Giollagáin, 2024, eta Ó Giollagáin & Caimbeul, 2021). Egoera honetara iritsi izanak, non hizkuntza-sustapena babes bernakularrik gabe egiten baita, adierazten du egungo HPPa era nabarmen eta kaltegarrian urrundu dela bere hasierako definiziotik, zeina Fishmanek garatu baitzuen batez ere (1964, 1989, 1991, 2001), azpimarra hizkuntza baten gizarte-dimentsioan jarritz.

Aldaketa hau nola gertatu zen aztertzeak lagundu liezaieke ikusmolde desbideratu horiei HPPa bide gizartekoi eta postneoliberal batera itzularazten. Norabide-aldaketa horren arrazoien artean egon litezke, besteak beste, azkenaldian ugaritu eta modan jarri diren hainbat diskurtso identitario (cf. Grin, 2018), zeinak GutxHen sustapen ofizialki onartuetan nagusitzen joan den joera sektorialistarekin batera zabaldu baitira. GutxHen politika identitarioek eta joera sektorialista zedarrituek elkarrekin sortu zuten efektuak GutxHPParen ikusmolde jakin bat zabaldu zuen, zeinak, paradoxikoki, *laissez faire* erako jarrera neoliberal bat bultzatu baitzuen, guztiz kaltegarria jada gainbehera demolinguistikoan zeuden gutxiengo bernakularrentzat.

Fishmanek (1989, 1991) GutxHPParen inguruan zuen ikusmolde soziopolitikoa, zeina Hizkuntzaren Mantentzea (hizkuntza mantentzeko estrategia soziofuntzionalekin belaunaldien arteko transmisioa bermatzea) eta Hizkuntzaren Biziberritzea (hizkuntza indarberritzeko neurriak ezartzea) uztartzen dituen estrategia gisa deskribatzen baita, itzalpean geratu zen GutxHen kondizioaren deskribapen eta diagnostiko analitikoki ahulagoen ondorioz. Diagnostiko

analitikoki ahulagoek nabarmen baztertu zituzten HPPa bideratzeko proposamen emankorrakoak. Fishmanek honako puntu hauen garrantzia azpimarratu zuen:

- GutxHen transmisioa eta belaunaldien arteko jarraitutasuna.
- Plangintza soziala eta talde arteko eta talde barruko garapen politikoak.
- Gutxiengo bernakularrarentzako garapen komunitario eta sozioekonomikoaren inguruan ardazturiko hizkuntza-politika erregionalak.

Eta, aldi berean, honako puntu hauek indartzea proposatu zuen:

- Arreta paraleloa H2ren jabekuntzan eta sareetan.
- Berrikuntza kultural eta teknologikoak GutxHentzat.
- Jabekuntza-plangintzak hezkuntzan eta hizkuntza gutxituetan egiten den irakaskuntzan.
- Gutxiengoentzako politika instituzional eta sinbolikoak hizkuntza maiortarioa nagusi den gobernu-sistema zabalagoan.

Diskurtso- eta politika-mailan Fishmanen ikusmolde gizartekoitik egon den desbideratzearen ondorioz, GutxHen sustapenaren bertsio murriztu batek mugatu izan du hizkuntza-plangintza. Anbizio soziopolitiko zabal baten gisa abiarazi zena politika sozial estuago eta ahulago batera murriztu zen GutxHen testuinguru askotan. HPParen bertsio murriztu hori nahikoa izan zen GutxHen jarduera zibikoa eta arau-betetze burokratikoa eragiteko, baina desegokia gertatu zen GutxHen aldeko politikak BEa sostengatzera bideratuko zituen indar esanguratsu gisa. Labur esanda, kontzeptu fishmandarrak alde batera uztearen ondorioz, hizkuntza-sustapen sinboliko bihurtu zen hizkuntza-plangintza. GutxHPP sinbolikoa, ekimen sektorial zibikoetara mugatua, burokratikoki komenigarria gertatu zen GutxHen botere-klaseentzat, eta, aldi berean, baita politikoki eroso ere. Gizarte-eta politika-alorreko anbizio falta hori zela eta, GutxHen sustapenak ez zuen gehiengoengan aurkakotasun handirik eragin GutxHen horniketa sektorialari eskainitako arreta eta gastuaren inguruan⁶. GutxHPP sinbolikoa, bere izaera ez-gatazkatsuegatik, segurua zen gehiengoentzat eta, aldi berean, gizarte-pisu gutxikoa gutxiengoentzat.

GutxHPParen ikusmolde murriztu eta ez hain anbizioitsu horrek helburu hauetara mugatu du pixkanaka arreta:

6. Esaterako, *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language* estrategiarekin lotutako kostuek ez zuten gehiengoarengan erreakzio negatiborik sortu Irlandan, nahiz eta ez dirudien estrategia horretan gastatutakoak inolako errentagarritasunik ekarri zionik gizarteari.

- Estatusaren eta corpusaren plangintza egitea, hau da, baliabideen plangintza, eta ez komunitatean zentratutako HPPa.
- GutxHen sustapen-organoen profil sinbolikoa areagotzea.
- Hezkuntzaren, hedabideen, arteen, akademiaren eta berrikuntza teknologikoaren alorretan GutxHen aldeko ekimenak sektorialki zabaltzea eta finantzatzea.
- GutxHen biziberritzeari dagokionez H2-kezkak lehenesten dituen ikuspegi bat bultzatzea, eta, ondorioz, maila berean jartzea hizkuntza gutxituak H2 moduan sustatzeko ahaleginak eta gutxiengoen biziberritzea, eta H2ren berpizkundea lehenestea GutxHen diskurtso nagusi moduan.

H2-ikuspegiaren nagusitasunak ondorio hauek ekarri ditu:

- Ez da arreta estrategiko nahikorik jartzen GutxH-hiztunen dentsitate sozial handiko eremuetan transmisioa mantentzeko dauden zailtasunetan.
- Hizkuntza-politika ez da aski malgua eraldaketa sozioekonomiko, gizarte-mailako eta teknologikoetara egokitzeko, eta GutxHen alorreko diskurtsibismoak guztiz baztertu du GutxHen (post-)modernitateko hauskortasunean zentratzen den ikuspegi soziologikoa, askoz beharrezkoagoa.
- GutxHen arazo sozial korapilatsuei erantzun neoliberal eta *laissez faire* estilokoa ematen zaie.

Arretagune nagusia H2n jartzen duten ikuspegi neoliberalek gobernatutako testuinguruetan, GutxHPP faltsuak sortu dira. Izaera faltsu hori argi islatzen da esfera politiko, akademiko eta ofizialek H1 bernakularren gainbeheraren aurrean agertzen duten nahasmenduan, H2 nagusi den hizkuntza-politika nola egiten den ikusita⁷. Gizarte-erronkak saihestuz, agenda diskurtsibista baten mendeko bihurtzen da H2-GutxH-politika, eta tropo erlijiosoen multzo baten itxura hartzen du, non, biziberritze-anbizioak asetzeko, erakundeek gidatutako ekimen kultural, sinboliko eta pedagogikoetara jotzea gomendatzen baita. Era berean, gutxiengoa sostengatzen duen merkatu sozioekonomikoa txikitzen doanez komunitate bernakularra demolinguistikoki ahuldu ahala, GutxHen aldeko aktibismoa aparatatu zibiko ofizialaren gero eta mendekoago bihurtzen da GutxHen sustapenerako (cf. Cameron, 2012). Estatuak finantzaturiko aktibismo mota hau erraz bihurtu daiteke sistemari atxikitako aktibismo mota bat, zeinaren bidez erakundeek inspiratutako diskurtso gutxi batzuk modu seguruagoan eta polemika

7. Ikusi nolako eztabaida sortu zen Ó Giollagáin *et al.* 2020 argitalpenaren ondoren: Nance 2021, eta McLeod *et al.* 2022. Erantzunentzat, ikusi: Ó Giollagáin *et al.* 2022a,b; Ó Curnáin & Ó Giollagáin 2021.

gutxiagorekin zabaldu baitaitezke gizartean gutxiengo linguistiko bideragarri bat sostengatzeko kezka errealak baino. Sistemari atxikitako aktibismo horren ondorio bat mundu akademikoan nabari daiteke, ikusita nola hautematen duten GutxHen inguruko ikertzaileek gaur egungo GutxHen gizarte-errealitatea. Unibertsitate-mailan GutxHak ikertzeko erabili ohi den ikusmolde filologiko eta estetikoak, bereziki gizarte-erronketatik bereizita praktikatzen eta garatzen denean, garrantzi intelektual mugatuko bilaketa akademizistatzat jotzen da maiz, gutxiengo-egoeran dirauen zibilizazioaren eguneroko borroka soziopolitikoak bizi dituztenekiko enpatia gutxi erakusten duen ikerketatzat.

Ikuspegi fishmandar batetik, H2-kezketan jarritako gehiegizko arretak H1 mantentzeko baldintza estrategikoekiko axolagabetasuna areagotzen lagundu zuen. Hutsune estrategiko horrek komunitate bernakularretako egoera gero eta okerragoaren inguruko hausnarketa soziologiko eta politiko ahulentzako baldintzak sortu zituen, eta, azkenerako, premiazko gizarte-erronken inguruko GutxHPP ahulak ugaritzea ekarri zuen. Arreta guztia H2-kezketan jartzeko joera eroso horrez eta gehiengoak GutxHarekiko dituen eskakizun sinbolikoez gain, badira H1-komunitateetako gizarte-ezgonkortasunarekiko nahasmendua eragin duten beste faktore batzuk. Nagusia hauxe litzateke: aktibistak eta akademikoak, estatuko funtzionarioekin ideologikoki bat eginda, isilbidezko akordio batera iritsiak direla, eta, hala, GutxHekiko engaiamendu instituzional eta sinbolikoa gehiengoaren kultura nagusiaren barruan hedatzera bideratzen dituztela beren ahalegin guztiak. Nahiz eta ikusmolde horrek oso modu erosoan areagotu zuen GutxHen babeserako erakundeek gehiengoaren aparatu zibiko zabalagoaren barruan zuten onargarritasuna, H1en desagerpenaren inguruko balizko lotsa baztertzeko edo estaltzeko ere balio izan zuen, GutxHPpek kontrakoa baieztatu arren. Ikuspegi honetatik, GutxHPP gehienek, oharkabean bada ere, H1en gainbehera bernakularra eragiten ari diren baldintza sozial eta politikoak erreproduzitzen laguntzen dute, HPpek GutxHen egoera larria eta ezgonkortasuna leuntzeko ezarritako xedeen kontra.

Askotan, GutxHen botere-klasea ingurune sozial berezi batean bizi da, non ez baitio aurre egin behar H1en gainbehera gertatzen ari den testuinguru bernakularrean bizitzearen eguneroko esperientziari (cf. Ó Giollagáin & Ó Curnáin, 2024; Ó Giollagáin in press, 2025; eta Ó Giollagáin in press). Naturalki, beraz, joera gutxiago du instituzionalki bideratutako gutxiengoen politiken estutasun kontzeptuala salatzeke. Gainbeheran den gutxiengo bernakular baten soziopolitika gordina ez esperimentatzean, GutxHen gizarte-errealitateari iskin egitea, GutxHen sustapen zibikoarekiko mendekotasunaren bidez, bat dator GutxHei esleitutako horniketa instituzionalaren mugen barruan diharduen GutxH-

realpolitikarekin, baina ez gehiengoaren hegemonia soziopolitikoari enbarazu egiteko moduan. Labur esanda, gutxiengo bernakularren ikuspuntutik, GutxHen politika instituzionalen muga zibikoak ezin dira politika sozialekin parekatu. Horrek laguntzen du azaltzen zergatik senti dezakeen gutxiengoak galduta dabilen lidergo politiko instituzional batek gidatzen duela, zeinak gutxiengoaren kulturari esker existitzen den kultura-aniztasunarekiko gehiengoaren atxikimendu sinbolikoari egiten baitio nagusiki mesede.

HizDG marko kontzeptual gisa

Hizkuntzaren Dinamika Gizartean edo HizDG markoak (Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2025, LanDS) iradokitzen du elkarrekin erlazionatuta dauden eta elkar indartzen duten gizarte-prozesuen arabera funtzionatzen duen hizkuntza-dinamika batek baldintzatzen duela bizindar etnolinguistikoa (BE). HizDG ikusmoldeak, BEa azaltzeko, gutxiengo baten jarraitutasun, ezegonkortasun edo ahultze kolektiboa eragiten duten gizarte-elkarrekintza polifazetikoetan oinarritzen den teoria bat aurkeztzen du. Gaur egungo testuinguruan, non edonon ikusten baita GutxH bernakularren desagertzea (Crystal, 2000; Harrison, 2007; Bradley & Bradley, 2019), aldaketa etnolinguistikoa eragin dezaketen dinamika sozialak ulertzea baldintza analitiko ezinbestekoa da ibilbide demolinguistiko ezegonkortzaileak geldiarazi edo alderantzizatzeko ekimen kolektibo, instituzional edo estatalak deskribatzeko, azaltzeko eta ezartzeko. HizDG analisi diziplinartekoak gutxiengo baten barruko edo gutxiengoaren eta gehiengoaren arteko dinamika komunal/sozialetan jartzen du azpimarra. Dinamika horiek baldintzatzen dituzte jokaera etnolinguistiko indibidual eta komunalak eta psikologia soziala.

Aniztasun kultural eta linguistikoaren galera globalak erantzun holistiko bat eskatzen du, krisi ekologikoari eman zaion erantzun globalaren antzekoa. HizDG aurkezteko berriki argitaratu dugun artikuluan, errealitatean oinarritutako marko orohartzaile bat aurkeztzen dugu hizkuntzak gizarteetan nola bizi diren ulertzeko edo, modu teknikoago batean esanda, iraunkortasun etnolinguistikoa eta munduko hizkuntza-aniztasuna mehatxatzen duen krisi soziolinguistikoa deskribatzeko.

Ingurumen-zientzietan, habitataren babesa funtsezko kontzeptua da hondamen ekologikoaren mehatxuari aurre egiteko. Hizkuntza-kulturetan antzeko ikusmoldea behar da hizkuntza-aniztasunaren hondamenaren aurka borrokatzeko. Hizkuntza-komunitate batek bere burua birsortzeko duen gaitasuna galtzea, izan ere, habitata galtzearen baliokide soziolinguistikoa da. Mundu-mailan, kultura gutxituen desagertze-arriskua inflexio-puntu batera iritsia da. Hizkuntza handiak hedatzen ari dira, iraultza teknologikoaren indar erabatekoa atzean dutela, eta

hizkuntza txiki asko, berriz, hondoratzen ari dira; eboluzioaren teoriaren arabera, esan liteke «handienen biziraupena»-ren garai soziolinguistikoa bizitzen ari garela. Egungo inguruabarretan, habitat linguistikoen galeraren erritmoa handiagoa da biodibertsitatearen suntsipenarena baino. HizDG markoak metodologia bat proposatzen du dinamika horiek gizarte modernoetan aztertzeko.

Greenpeace oso ezaguna da munduan, baina gutxik izango dute, adibidez, Foundation for Endangered Languages edo desagertze-arriskuan dauden hizkuntzen aldeko fundazioaren aditza. Krisi ekologiko globalaren inguruko kontzientzia publikoa nabarmen handiagoa da arrisku soziolinguistikoari buruzko ezagutza baino. Bistan denez, hizkuntza-aniztasuna gehiengoarentzat garrantzirik gabekoa bada funtsean, hiztunen habitatak galtzea ere, gehiengoarentzat, garrantzirik gabeko kontua izango da. Ondorioz, jendeak ez du ulertzen zer egin behar den hizkuntza-aniztasuna babesteko. Aldi berean, kultura maioritario horietako jende askok lasai asko gozatzen du hizkuntza gutxituen estetikaren eta kulturaren zenbait alderdiz, kultura gutxituek beren habitat tradizioaletan irauteko dituzten oztopoez axolatu gabe. Ugariak dira osasun publikoari, ekologiari eta ekonomiari dagozkien kontuetan gomendioak ematen dituzten organismo nazional eta internazionalak. Ez dago horien antzeko agentzia izen handikorik, ordea, hizkuntza-aniztasun globalaren arriskuei aurre egiteko. Oraingoz, ez dago plan estrategiko edo agenda sofistikatu edo aipagarririk mundu osoan zabaldua dagoen hizkuntzen desagertze-arriskuari buru egiteko.

Aniztasun ekologikoari buruzko eztabaida publiko asko arrazoibide serioetan oinarritu ohi dira; hizkuntza-aniztasuna, aldiz, maila naif edo ez-zorrotz batean eztabaidatzen da askotan. Ondorioz, hizkuntza gutxituen inguruko eztabaida eta sustapen-ahaleginei koherentzia eta funts intelektuala falta zaizkie maiz, eta horrek murriztu egiten du hain beharrezkoa den errealismoa.

Talde linguistiko bat mantentzea, funtsean, taldea errealitate sozial bizi gisa iraunaraztea da. Birsorkuntza biosoziala bermatzen duen dinamika axiomatiko hau funtsezkoa da gure marko holistiko berri honetan iraunkortasun etnolinguistikoa ulertzeko eta sostengatzeko. Gure markoak belaunaldien arteko ziklo gisa ulertzen du hizkuntzaren transmisioa, eta feedback-bukle batean kokatutako lau koadrantetan aurkezten ditu hizkuntza-dinamika hauek. Belaunaldi arteko zikloak norbanakoek eta adin-taldeek bizitzan zehar duten bilakaera irudikatzen du. Jendeak, heldu ahala, gaitasun linguistikoak garatzen ditu lau koadrante nagusi hauetan zehar: 1) haurren lehen urteak (guk Hizkuntzaren Transmisioa eta Jabekuntza izendatzen ditugunak), non, esaterako, lehen arretako profesionalek taldearen hizkuntza erabiltzen baitute haurrekin; 2) haurtzaroaren bigarren

zattia (Sozializazioa eta Jabekuntza Sendotua), non, esaterako, haur zaharragoak beren hizkuntzan sozializatzen baitira elkarrekin; 3) helduaroa (Hedatze Zibikoa), non, esaterako, helduek lankidetzan jarduten baitute beren hizkuntzan, beren komunitatean aukera sozial eta ekonomikoak eratzeko; eta 4) gizarte zabalagoa (Etnizizazio Koherentea, Politika Zibikoa barne), non, esaterako, taldeko kideak taldearekin identifikatzen baitira eta politikoki parte hartzen baitute beren taldearen bideragarritasuna politikoki sostengatzeko. Norbanakoek eta adin-taldeek koadranteetan zehar aurrera egin ahala, heldu egiten dira, eta hurrengo belaunaldiarentzako oinarri izango den gizarte bat eratzen dute; ondorioz, hurrengo belaunaldia 1. koadrantean sartzen da, eta, horrela, zikloa garatzen joaten da eta iraunkortasunerako testuinguruak erreproduzitzen ditu.

Elkarrekin erlazionatutako lau etapa interdependente hauek elkar sendotzen dute ziklo iraunkor batean. Haurrak hizkuntza-kultura bat(zu)ez jabetzen dira (1. koadrantea), eta beste batzuekin praktikatzan dituzte heldu ahala (2. koadrantea). Hitzunek beste batzuekin praktikatzan dute kultura, eta elkarrekin sortzen dituzte, nola intimoak hala zibikoak, zeinek haien hizkuntza-kultura(k) sendotu baititzaizkete (3. koadrantea). Norbanakoek beren talde(ar)ekin eta elkarrekin dituzten elkarrekintza horiek haien politika eta identitate kolektiboaren oinarria eratzen dute (4. koadrantea). Ondorioz, 1. koadrantetik 4.era inoko bilakaera psikologiko eta garapenezkoak norbanako gazteen, familien, komunitateen eta gizartearen esperientziak barne hartzen ditu, baita hezkuntzarekin eta bizitza zibiko, sozioekonomiko eta politikoarekin duten elkarrekin ere. Horrek osatzen du HizDG marko holistikoaren oinarritzako muina.

Badira talde linguistikoaren bizitzaren alderdi guztietan eragiten duten lau Printzipio Orokor, eragin saihetsezina dutenak azaldu berri ditugun koadranteetan. Hauek dira lau Printzipioak: 1) Norabidea (hots, norbanakoen eta taldeen bilakaera multidimentsionala belaunaldien barruan eta belaunaldiz belaunaldi); 2) Prozesua (norbanakoen heldu-prozesuaren eta taldearen iraunkortasunaren arteko dinamika); 3) Parte-hartzea (nola parte hartzen duen jendeak bizitza soziolinguistikoaren alderdi guztiz sozialetan); eta azkenik 4) Lehia (norbanakoek eta talde linguistikoek hizkuntz(ar)ekin eta kultur(ar)ekin erlazionatzeko eta beren baliabide pertsonal eta kolektiboak testuinguru horiei aplikatzeko duten ahalmenaren izaera lehiakorra. Lau Printzipio hauek elkarrekin lotutako lau errealitate psikosozial, demografiko eta soziolinguistiko funtsezko irudikatzen dituzte. Denboran zeharreko prozesu biosozialak barne hartzen dituzte, edo, beste hitz batzuetan esanda, dinamika kultural, sozial, ekonomiko eta politiko kooperatibo eta lehiakorretan parte hartzen duten norbanakoen eta taldeen progresio kronologikoa.

Politikoki, 4. printzipioak garrantzi berezia du talde linguistikoek nonahi bizi duten arrisku-egoeraren testuinguruan. Norbanakoen eta hizkuntza-entitate politikoen arteko eta horien barruko lehiakortasun orohartzailea bereziki nabarmentzen dugu gure markoan. 4. printzipioak kontuan hartzen ditu dinamika lehiakor globalizatuak, tartean gutxiengoentzako aukera kultural eta ekonomikoen kostuak, eta azpimarra berezia jartzen du mundu zabaleko bizindar etnolinguistikoaren oraingo eta geroko iraunkortasunaren arrisku-mailan. Aldaketaren botereak eta inoiz ez bezalako abiadurak areagotu egin ditzakete hizkuntza nagusien abantaila lehiakorrak.

Behean, xeheago azaltzen dugu nola eragiten duten lau Printzipio Orokorrek Garapen Koadranteetan. HizDG proiektua diagnostiko-marko holistiko bat da, osotasunaren, konplexutasunaren eta osagarritasunaren kontzeptuetan oinarritzen baita. (Gutxiengoan dagoen) talde kolektiboaren kontzeptu garrantzitsua azpimarratzen du, bai eta norbanakoak talde horretan duen posizioa ere. Postestrukturalistak, talde linguistikoaren inguruan duten ikuspegi individualizatuaren eraginez, urrundu egin dira zoritxarrez funtsezko kontzeptu honetatik. Labur esanda, (gutxiengoan dagoen) taldea ez bada gaur sostengatzen, argi dago bihar ez dela egongo (gutxiengo hizkuntzaren) hiztunen multzo esanguratsurik.

Egungo ikusmoldeek 3. koadrantea (Hedatze Zibikoa) nabarmendu ohi dute besteen gainetik, eta, bereziki, hizkuntza gutxitu baten erabilera sinbolikoa edo haren sustapen zibikoa. Horrek eragotzi egiten du HizDG markoaren ikusmolde holistikoa aplikatzea. Era berean, hizkuntza gutxituen egungo sustapenak bazter uzten du maiz errealitate demolinguistikoaren eremu osoan zentratzeko premia, eta ez ditu kontuan hartzen HizDG markoko lau printzipioak: Norabidea, Prozesua, Parte-hartzea eta Lehia. Adibidez, gaur egun garrantzi handiegia eman ohi zaio hizkuntza gutxituak eguneroko errealitatetik isolatuta irakasteari, eta horrek komunitate-transmisioaren garrantzia alde batera uztea ekar dezake.

Egungo ikusmolde gehienek dituzten mugen aurkako erremedio gisa, gure HizDG markoak *statu quotik* irteten eta desberdintasun linguistikoaren sinbolismo xalotik harago joaten lagunduko die talde linguistikoek. HizDG ikusmoldeak errealitatean oinarritutako marko holistiko bat proposatzen du hizkuntza-sustapenerako eta hizkuntza-aniztasunaren babeserako.

Gutxiengoen dinamika sozialetako Garapen Koadranteetako Printzipio Orokorrak: Norabidea; Prozesua; Parte-hartzea eta Lehia

Lau Printzipio Orokorrak (PO) hauek (Norabidea, Prozesua, Parte-hartzea eta Lehia) berebiziko garrantzia dute lau Garapen Koadranteetan (GK). Idealki, lau GKEk mugimendu progresibo bat eragiten dute etapa batetik hurrengora, eta GK bakoitzaren barruko dinamika, aldi berean, lau PO hauek baldintzatzen dute. BE iraunkorrerako, Hizkuntzaren Babes eta Sustapenerako (HIBASU) eta HPPrako hain funtsezkoa den osotasunaren kontzeptu orohartzaileak (Ó Curnáin & Ó Giollagáin, 2024, 412. or.) elkarreragin osagarri eta dinamiko batean sartzen ditu PO eta GK hauek guztiak. Lau POek etengabeko eragina dute HizDG markoko BE-dinamika egituratu eta elkarri lotuetan. GK hauek norbanakoentzako etapa sekuentzial gisa ikus daitezke, bai eta talde etnolinguistikoarentzako ekintza-, partaidetza- eta garapen-esfera gisa ere.

Norabidea

1. irudiak⁸ gutxiengoen dinamika sozialetako norabidearen kontzeptua erakusten du. Norabide hori bi ardatzen gainean mugitzen da. Ardatz bertikalak, lehenik, belaunaldien arteko GutxHaren transferentzia soziala adierazten du, eta horren barruan hizkuntzarekin lotutako kapital sozial eta kulturalaren transmisioa (Bourdieu, 2017, 183-184. or.). 1. irudiko Y ardatzeko funtsezko osagaia, beraz, gaitasun linguistikoen eta hizkuntzarekin lotutako kulturaren transferentzia da, aurreko belaunaldi(eta)tik belaunaldi berrira egiten dena. 1. irudiak hori irudikatzen du: ibilbide bertikal bat, GutxHaren lehen transferentziazatik abiatuz 1. eta 2. GK sozialen etapetatik igarotzen dena, eta 3. eta 4. GK instituzional/formalei ere badagokien transferentzia sozializaturaino iristen dena; izan ere, transferentzia sozializatua belaunaldien arteko transmisioaren lehen transferentziaren jarraipen bat da ardatz bertikalean. Garai kritikoko jabekuntza elebiduna etxetik edo lehen sozializaziotik kanpo gerta daiteke, adibidez GutxHko haur-eskoletan, non hizkuntza nagusiko haurrak GutxHaz jabetu baitaitezke.

8. HizDG markoaren autoreek beren esker ona adierazten diote Nóirín Ní Ghiollagáini HizDG markoaren inguruko diagrama kontzeptualak (1-4 irudiak) prestatzeko egindako diseinu-lanagatik.

1. irudiak belaunaldien arteko dinamika sozial iraunkorren lau Garapen Koadranteak irudikatzen ditu:

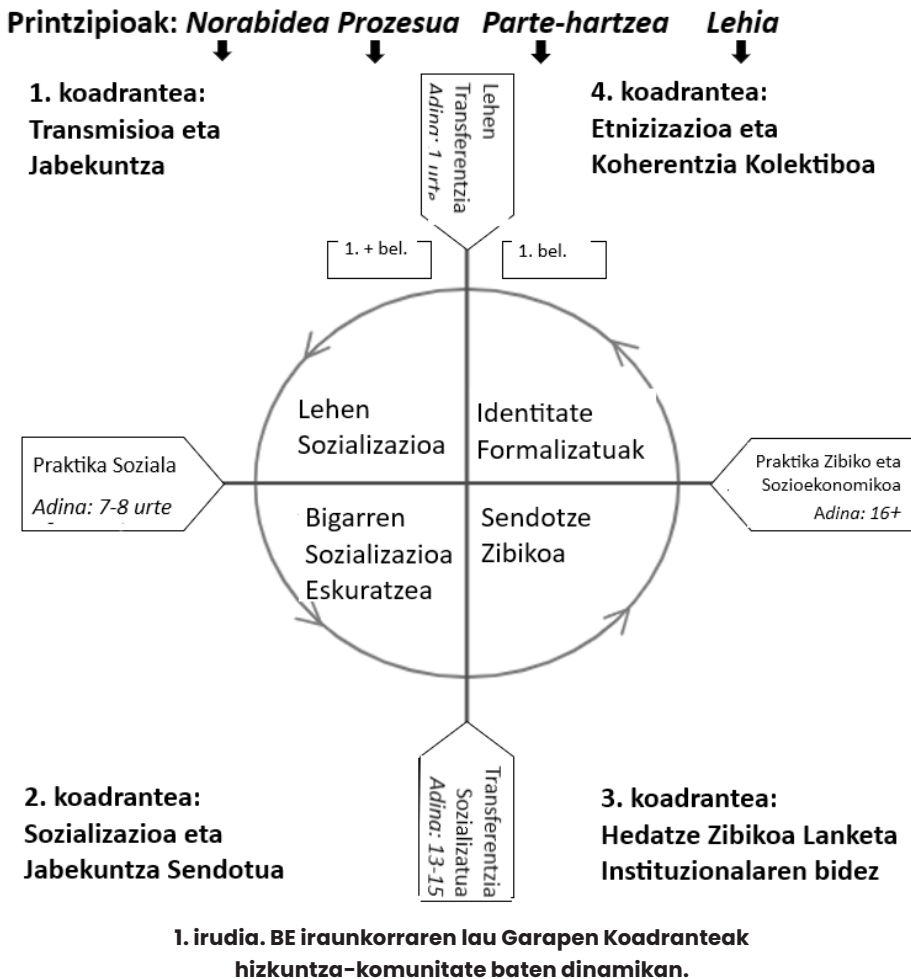
1. Garapen Koadrantea – Hizkuntzaren Transmisioa eta Jabekuntza

2. Garapen Koadrantea – Sozializazioa eta Hizkuntzaren Jabekuntza Sendotua

3. Garapen Koadrantea – Lanketa Zibiko, Sozioekonomiko eta Instituzionala

4. Garapen Koadrantea – Etnizizazio Koherentea.

1. irudiko dinamika zirkularreko norabide-geziek BE iraunkorrak lau GKetan zehar egiten duen ibilbidea irudikatzen dute. Dinamikaren norabidea ardatz horizontalean mugitzen ere ikus daiteke, hots, hizkuntza eta kultura gutxituaren praktika belaunaldi bateko edo belaunaldi arteko hainbat agertoki sozial eta geografikotan. Horren barruan legoke komunitateetan, eskoletan, erakunde zibikoetan eta sustapen-sektoreetan egiten den GutxHaren praktika. Hori irudikatzen du 1. irudiko ibilbide horizontalak: 1. eta 2. GKetan egiten den hizkuntzaren Praktika Sozialetik, 3. eta 4. GKetako prozesu instituzional/formalei dagokien Praktika Zibiko eta Sozioekonomikoraino. Ibilbide horrek norabide bakarrean jarduten du, mikro-testuinguru batetik makro-testuinguru batera; izan ere, Praktika Zibiko eta Sozioekonomikora eta identitatearen eraketa positibora iristeko, testuinguru sozial bernakularreko Praktika Sozial informalagotik igaro beharra dago. HizDG markoan irudikatutako GKen etapa gero eta zabalagoek praktika-komunitateen sareen hedatzea irudikatzen dute, mikro-mailatik gizartean hedakorrak diren makro-testuinguruetarainoko progresio dinamikoa barne hartuz.



Prozesua

Prozesuaren kontzeptua etapa sozial edo garapen-etapetan progresiboki mugitzeko dinamika sozialari dagokio. Mugimendu hori etapen barrukoa, etapetan zeharrekoa edo etapa batetik besterakoa izan daiteke. Gizarte-dinamikaren inguruan ardaztutako marko honetan, lau GKetara barrena egiten den progresioak gizarte-iraunkortasun optimoa lortzeko garabideekiko atxikimendu optimoa adierazten du. Norabidearen eta Prozesuaren Printzipioek dimentsio historiko bat dute, belaunaldien arteko kultura- eta hizkuntza-transferentzia ziklikoaren faktore garrantzitsuak direla eta, hau da, hiztun-talde batek denboran zehar metatzen duen ondare kulturala dela eta. Esandakoak esanda, prest gaude orain lau GKez hitz egiteko.

1. koadrantea: Transmisioa. Hizkuntza eta kultura gutxituaren garai kritikoko jabekuntzari dagokio. Jabekuntza hori familiako transmisioaren bidez egiten da, edota lehen arretako testuinguru batean, non lehen sozializazioaren hasierako prozesuak gertatzen baitira eta gaitasun soziokultural gorpuztuak garatzen hasten baitira (Clark, 2009; Montrul, 2008; Péterváry *et al.*, 2014; Benmanoun *et al.*, 2013).

2. koadrantea: Sozializazioa. Hizkuntza eta kultura gutxitua gazteen edo adiskide taldeen artean praktikatuz lortzen den heltze eta sendotze soziala, 1. GKko lehen transmisioari jarraitzen diona (cf. Hasan, 1988). Sendotze sozial hau gertatzeko, testuinguru komunal jakin batzuk behar dira, non gutxiengoak baduen gaitasuna alde aurretik lehen sozializazioa bizi izan duten gazteen dentsitate sozial nahikoa eratzeko. Prozesu honen bidez sozializatzen dira gazteak beren gutxiengoko adiskideekin etxeko/familiako testuingurutik harago. Ikuspuntu honetatik, gutxiengoetako bigarren sozializazio gisa deskriba liteke 2. GKa.

3. koadrantea: Hedatze Zibiko eta Sozioekonomikoa. Hedatze hau eskoletan, organizazio kolektiboetan, erakunde zibikoetan eta bestelako elkarte edo foro publikoetan egiten den GutxHaren praktikaren sendotze zibikotik egiten da. Esfera profesionala eta mugikortasun sozioekonomikoa biltzen dira 3. GKan. Bikotekidea hautatzen da eta familia eratzen da 3. GKan. Prozesu hauek, horrela, alde aurretik testuinguru sozial edo komunal intimo, informal eta ez-programatuetan (Calvet, 2006) bizi izandakoa formalki edo instituzionalki sendotzeko balio dute, eta helduen eta taldeen garapen-etapa aurreratuak ahalbidetzen dituzte (cf. Bernstein, 1971 (kode landuei dagokienez); Hulstijn, 2017 (hizkuntza-kognizio altuagoari dagokienez)).

3. eta 4. GKetako hizkuntza-politika formal eta informalak erabakigarriak izan daitezke GutxHPPen eraginkortasun/onargarritasun estrategikoan. GutxHen inguruko iritzien eraketa-prozesuak ongi sustraituta daude 4. GKko diskurtso publikoen doxan, eta diskurtso horiek zerikusi gutxi dute 3. GKko gizarte-zantzu frogatuen epistemean. Ondorioz, GutxHen inguruko iritzien eraketa-prozesuek etnizizazio koherentea / identitatearen eraketa sendoa (4. GKa) lortzeko aukeren aurka egingo dute ezinbestean, eta, beraz, kalte egingo diote BEa sustatzeko arrazoi kolektiboekiko atxikimendu esanguratsu eta komunitate-mailakoari (zeina 3. eta 4. GKetatik sortzen baita).

4. koadrantea: Etnizizazio Koherentea. Koadrante honetan, gutxiengo bateko kide desberdinek identitate iraunkorra, eraketa ideologikoa eta sendotze sozialerako praktikak elikatze eta haiei atxikitze behar duten gizarte-testuinguru zabalagoa sortzen da. Hizkuntza nagusiaren Etnizizazioarekiko lehia-testuinguruan, GutxH-belaunaldi bakoitzak hizkuntza barruko eta etnia

arteko diskurtso eta parte-hartzeen bidez negoziatzen eta formulatzen du bere identitatea. Negoziazio jarraitu horien xedea hauxe da: kontsentsu iraunkor bat lortzea hizkuntza nagusiaren etnizazio asimilatzailearen eta HIBASUa sostengatuz eta (ber)indartuz lortuko den GutxHaren Hedatze Zibikoaren artean. Badira prozesu indibidual eta kolektibo batzuk zeinetan alderdi etnolinguistikoak taldearen identitate kolektiboaren osagai nabarmen eta ezaguterraz gisa sendotuta edo formalizatuta dauden, eta GK honek prozesu horien alderdi batzuk biltzen ditu bere baitan, besteak beste identitatea nola hautematen den indibidualki eta nola esleitzen eta ezartzen den kolektiboki. Gutxiengo baten identitate-zentzuaren koherentzia kolektiboa demostratzeko, kontuan hartu behar da nolako desira eta gaitasuna duen gutxiengoak identitatea esleitzeko prozesuak praxiarekin bateratzeko, tartean daudelarik gutxiengoak kultura-talde lehiakideen aurrean duen gizarte-posizioa babesteko edo hobetzeko egiten dituen ahalegin praktikoak.

Hizkuntza-politikaren sorketa eta lanketa 4. GKari dagokio. Kasu batzuetan, trebetasun politikoaren faltak edo 3. GKko ekimen zibikoen administrazio edo inplementazio formalaren gizarte-eraginkortasun ahulak eragin kaltegarria izan dezake GutxHarentzako dinamika positibo gisa funtzionatzen duten 3. eta 4. GKetan. 3. eta 4. GKek berebiziko garrantzia dute GutxHa gizartean egonkortzeko; izan ere, GK hauek eskaintzen dute gutxiengo linguistiko kohesibo batek behar duen testuinguru kolektibo kritikoa bere egoera sostengatzeko eginmolde berritzaileak diseinatzeko eta inplementatzeko (cf. Fishman, 2001). Ó Curnáin & Ó Giollagáin (2024, 403. or.) lanean «anglobalizazioa» eta Munduko Hizkuntza Sistemak aztertzean argudiatu bezala, hizkuntza demografikoki handiak eta are mega-hizkuntzak (esaterako frantsesa, hindia, bengalera, ingelesak ez diren hizkuntza europarrak eta abar) agentibitate indibidual eta kolektiboko elkarreragin dinamiko honetan nahasita daude, hizkuntza-kultura gutxitu eta gutxitzaile gisa, bere alderdi negatiboetan eskubide soziolinguistiko globalen tragedia gisa deskriba litekeen egoeran⁹.

Parte-hartzea praxi moduan

Dinamiketan parte-hartzearen kontzeptua, funtsean, GKetan zehar garatzen den gutxiengoari dagozkion jardura sozial, sozioekonomiko, politiko eta kultural askotarikoetan diharduten jokalaria, parte-hartzaile, talde edo praktika-komunitate

9. BEaren inguruko markoek prozesu eleaniztun historikoak ere hartu behar dituzte aintzat: «Gainera, Afrikako hirien hazkundea landa-eremuetatik migrazioaren ondorio denez hein handi batean, argi dago hirietako eleaniztasuna behar bezala ulertzeko ezinbestekoa izango dela jendeak landa-eremuetatik hirietara aldatzean edo hirien eta landa-eremuen artean joan-etorrian ibiltzean berekin ekartzen dituen eleaniztasun motak hobeto ulertzea» (Di Carlo & Good, 2020, xxiii-iv).

ugariei dagokie. Jarduera horien artean dago gutxiengo linguistikoaren baldintza komunalak betetzera bideratutako sektore instituzionaletan (esaterako kirol-klubetan eta eskoletan) duten parte-hartzea.

Gutxiengoaren dinamika sozialen gizarte-dimentsioak biltzen dituzten jokalaria sozialen artean, honako hauek daude:

- Hizkuntza gutxitua lehen hizkuntza gisa darabilten hiztunak, parte-hartzaileak lehen Hizkuntza Kulturaren murgilarazten dituztenak.
- Hizkuntza gutxitua bigarren hizkuntza gisa darabilten hiztunak, parte-hartzaileak lehen Hizkuntza Kulturarekin erlasionatutako Kultura Tangentzial Gutxituan (ikusi beherago) murgilarazten dituztenak.
- Hizkuntza gutxitua bigarren hizkuntza gisa darabilten edo ikasten ari diren hiztunak, tartean Neokultura Gutxituaren (ikusi beherago) aldekoak edo parte-hartzaileak.
- Gutxiengoarentzako horniduren alde dauden gehiengo linguistikoko kideak.
- Gutxiengoarentzako horniduren kontra dauden gehiengo linguistikoko kideak.
- Lehen Hizkuntza Kulturako lider komunitarioak, eta batez ere GutxHaren geografia sozialean bizi direnak.
- GutxHaren sustapen zibikoan edo HPP-erakundeetan diharduten lider sektorialak.
- Lehen Hizkuntza Kulturarentzako eta GutxHko sektore zibikoentzako hornidura zibikoan positiboki nahiz negatiboki eragiten duten lider politiko, burokratiko eta instituzionalak.

Gure markoaren ondorioa da parte-hartzaile guztiek lau prozesuetako bakoitzak irauten duen bitartean egiten dituzten ekintza (eta ekintza-ez) indibidual eta kolektiboek HPP-emaitzak taxutzen dituztela eta hizkuntza gutxituaren BEan eragiten dutela.

Parte-hartzaileen arteko lehia

Laugarren Printzipio Orokorra, Parte-hartzaileen baitako eta arteko Lehiari buruzkoa, botere arauemaile eta politikoaren, geodemografiaren eta baliabide sozioekonomiko, zibiko eta kulturalen aurrean parte-hartzaile guztien artean sortzen den lehia-dinamika erabakigarriari dagokio. BEaren alorreko lehia-

dinamikaren funtsezko alderdi bat dimentsio konparatiboa da: hizkuntza nagusiko aurrerapenak gutxiengo linguistikoarenak baino askoz handiagoak izan daitezke, eta horrek pentsaraz dezake GutxHak ez duela behar besteko garapenik izan eta aukera murriztuak dituela. Lehia honek eragina du gizarte-indar positibo edo negatiboetan: sustapen-dinamika bat sor dezake, edo aitzitik dinamika kaltegarri bat, GutxHaren osotasun soziala eta tokiko gailentasuna eta BEa mantentzeko. BEaren HizDG teoriak begien bistako ondorioak izango ditu HPPan eta HIBASUan: GK erabakigarrietan egiten diren esku-hartzeak desberdinak izango dira aldagai esanguratsuek GK jakinetan eta HizDG dinamika orokorrean dituzten efektu neurgarrien arabera.

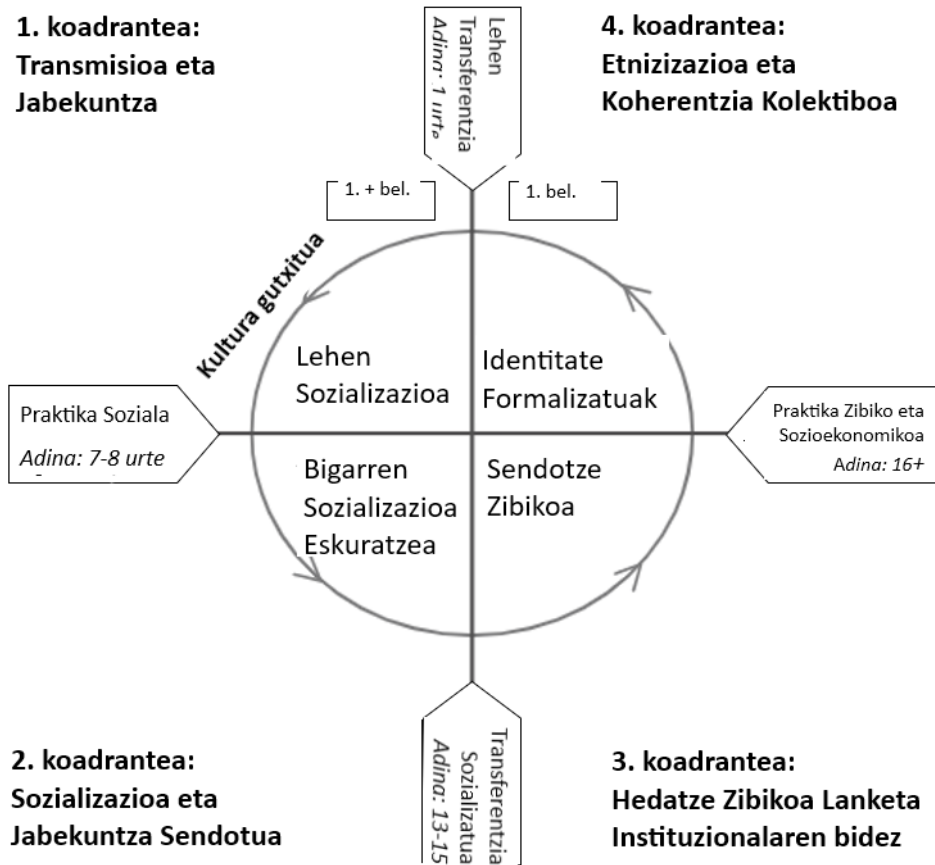
HizDG eredu ziklikoa mikro-mailatik makro-mailara doazen lau GK oinarritzoren hurrenkeran oinarritzen da, bere baitan bilduz norbanakoa edo adin-taldea heltzen eta sozialki garatzen doazen heinean haiengan gertatzen den garapen biologiko eta kronologikoa eta gizarte-sareen eta sare zibikoen izaera hedatzailea (ikusi beherago Prozesuari buruzko eztabaida). Fishmanen GIDS diagnostiko-eskemako mailak erraz egokitu daitezke gure HizDG ziklora: GIDSeKo 4-1 mailak gure 3. eta 4. GKei dagozkie, eta GIDSeKo 5. eta 6. mailak, berriz, 1. eta 2. GKetako BE-jarduerari. GIDSeKo 7. eta 8. mailetako alderdiak (EGIDSeKo 7-10 maileri dagozkienak) 3. eta 4. GKetan gertatzen dira, non 1. eta 2. GKetako gizarte-alderdiak islatzen baitira. Beste sistema konplexu batzuk bezala, gure GKak ere zati txikiagotan banatu daitezke desberdintze kategoriko xeheagoak zehazteko.

Hizkuntza gutxituen bizindar etnolinguistikoak

Garapen Koadranteetan zehar egiten duen bilakaeraren dinamika soziala

2. irudiak GutxHen BEak GK batetik bestera egiten duen bilakaera zirkularra irudikatzen du. Txikitzen doan emariak gutxiengo etnolinguistiko mehatxatua adierazten du: emariaren txikitzeak dinamika sozialean nabaritzen den gainbehera demolinguistikoa adierazten du, gutxiengo batek hizkuntza-aldaketaren mehatxua bizi duenean bezala. GutxHaren emariaren txikitze konparatiboak komunitatearen desadostasunak ere irudikatzen ditu, eta haren eragozpenak bere talde-bizindarrari belaunaldiz belaunaldi eusteko eta bere estatus demolinguistikoa mantentzeko. GutxHa lehen hizkuntza gisa (H1) darabilen komunitate bernakularrak lehiakide d(it)uen talde etnolinguistiko indartsuago(ar) en presio asimilatzaileak pairatu dituen ez edo pairatzen ari denez, txikitzen doan emariak GutxHaren transmisioaren jarraitutasunik eza deskribatzen du: nola GutxHan mintzatzeko gaitasuna eta kapital soziala dituen belaunaldi bat

ez den gauza hizkuntza hori hurrengo belaunaldiari transmititzeko, zeina talde etnolinguistiko lehiakidearen hizkuntzan haziko baita. 1. irudia aztertzean azaldu bezala, GutxHaren EBA lau PO nagusien arabera da: norbanakoek, adin-taldeek eta gizataldeek lau GKetan zehar egiten duten bilakaerari dagozkion Norabidearen, Prozesuaren, Parte-hartzearen eta Lehiaren arabera. BEaren Norabidearen printzipioak belaunaldi arteko ziklo bat adierazten du, zeina uraren zikloarekin alderatu baitaiteke, non euria erreka bihurtzen den, erreka ibai, ibaia lurrin eta lurrina berriro euri.



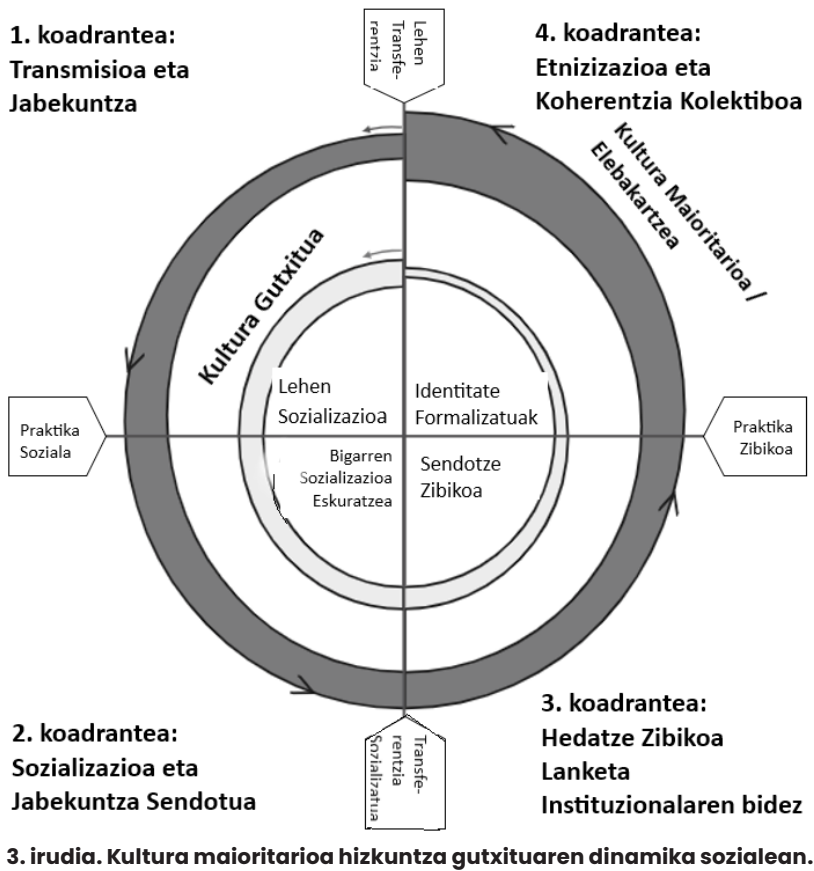
2. irudia. Lau Garapen Koadranteak hizkuntza gutxituak gainbeheran doazen dinamika sozialetan.

Gutxiengoaren hedadura demografiko absolutua txikitzen ari bada, eta hizkuntza gutxituaren hiztunen dentsitate sozial geografikoak galera esanguratsuak jasaten ari badira, argi dago gero eta norbanako gutxiago arituko direla lau GKetan parte hartzen. Transferentzia sozializatuaren onurak eta

sendotze zibiko eta adiskideen artekoa jasotzen dituzten parte-hartzaileen kopuruaren beherakadak gero eta aukera gutxiago uzten ditu etapa batetik hurrengorako bilakaera kolektibo eta sozioekonomikoa arrakastatsua izan dadin, eta behar adinako kopuruetan eta talde-dentsitateetan gerta dadin prozesu hauek gutxiengoko gazteriaren talde barruko eta talde arteko harremanen ezaugarri nabarmenenetakoak bihurtzeko. 2. irudiak, beraz, hizkuntza nagusi bateranzko aldaketa egiteko gizarte-presioa jasaten duen eta gehiengoaren funtzio normatiboekiko asimilazioaren aurka borrokatzen den gutxiengo linguistiko baten dinamika soziala deskribatzen du.

Dinamika sozialak: hizkuntza maioritarioaren hiztunak gutxiengoaren testuinguruan

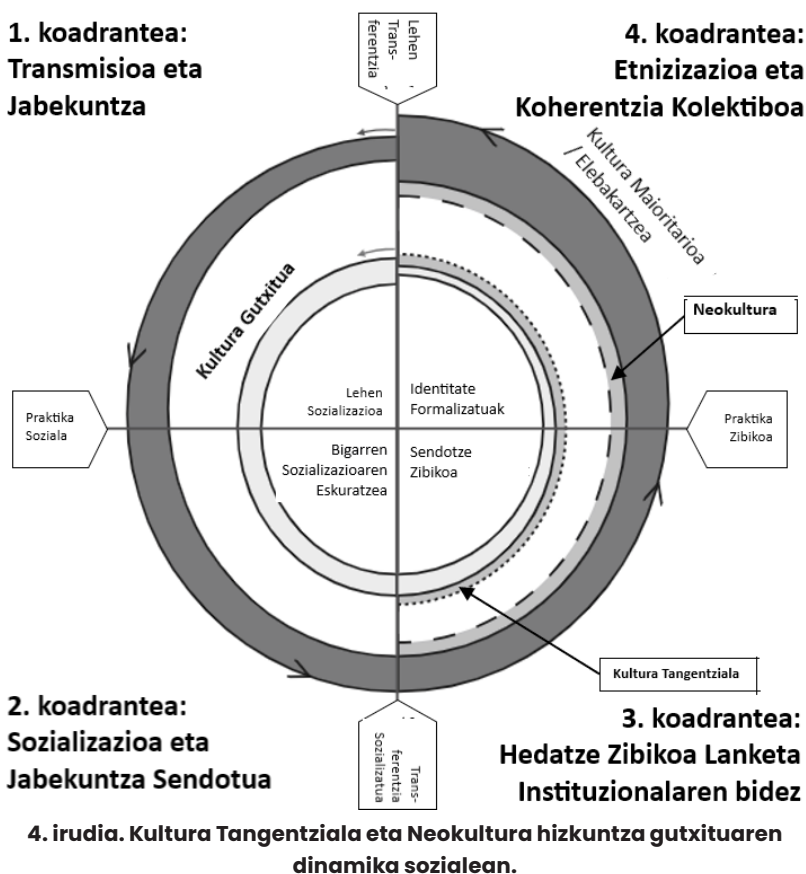
3. irudiak HizDG egituraren deskribapenean sakontzen du, eta hizkuntza maioritarioko parte-hartzaileek hizkuntza gutxituaren dinamika sozialean duten eragina irudikatzen du. Irudiak gris ilunago batez margoturiko emari gorakor bat ere erakusten du, norabidea irudikatzen duten gezi eta guzti: adierazten du hizkuntza maioritarioaren hiztunak dinamika positibo baten arabera mugitzen direla GKetan hizkuntza eta kultura maioritarioaren testuinguruan. Emari nagusi horren dimentsio gero eta handiagoak adierazten du hizkuntza maioritarioaren hiztunak gero eta gehiago direla GKetan zehar aurrera egin ahala, eta, ondorioz, fenomeno horren efektu (gutxiengoaren ikuspuntutik) kaltegarri edo ordezkapenezkoa ere erakusten du, gutxiengoaren geografia sozialean eta testuinguru zibiko eta instituzionalean hizkuntza maioritaria (nagusiki) erabiltzearen ondorioz sortua. Kanpoko zirkuluak, kultura maioritarioaren emariarenak, hizkuntza gutxituaren emaria inguratzen du, adierazteko hizkuntza-aldaketa pairatzen ari diren kultura minorizatuak kultura maioritarioak ezarritako muga barruan funtzionatu behar dutela, gehiengo kulturalaren botere-egiturekiko, menderatze zibikoarekiko eta eragin normatibizatzailearekiko menderakuntza-harreman batean.



Dinamika sozialak: Kultura Tangentzialeko eta Neokultu- rako Parte-hartzaileak gutxiengoaren testuinguruan

4. irudian, bi zerrenda erdizirkular gehitu zaizkio GutxHaren dinamika sozialari: batek GutxHaren gizarteko Kultura Tangentziala irudikatzen du, eta besteak gutxiengoaren Neokultura. Ertz puntudun batez apainduriko zerrenda erdizirkularrak, kultura gutxituen kanpoaldean dagoenak, GutxHaren dinamika sozialeko Kultura Tangentziala adierazten du. Zirkulu erdi tangentzial horrek GutxHaren H1-hiztunak ez diren baina GutxHa hitz egiten duten hiztun batzuek dinamika sozial minoritarioan betetzen duten rola irudikatzen du. Kultura Tangentzialeko parte-hartzaileak izateak esan nahi du hiztun horrek GutxHa eskuratu duela GutxHaren H1-komunitatearen geografia sozialean murgilduz eta hizkuntza gutxituko adiskide taldeen sozializazioaren alderdi komunal batzuetan parte hartuz. Parte-hartzaile Tangentzialak (PT) H1-komunitatearekiko harreman

tangentzial batean daudela esaten da, H1-hizkuntza eta -kultura bertatik bertara bizi izan dituztelako beren ingurune sozialean, GutxHaren ezagutza eskolaren bidez eskuratutako gaitasun batzuetara mugatu gabe. Ez dutenez GutxHaren lehen sozializazioa bizi izan (1. GKan), eta bigarren sozializazioaren Prozesuaren esperientzia partziala baino ez dutenez (2. GKan), 2. eta 3. GKen elkargunera iristean sartzen dira gutxiengoaren dinamika sozialean. PTek, beraz, bigarren sozializazioaren zati batean parte hartu dute, eta badute aski gaitasun linguistiko GutxHaren Sendotze Zibikoaz baliatzeko eta harentzat baliagarri izateko; horregatik dago zirkuluerdi tangentziala 3. eta 4. GKetan, eta horregatik datxekio kultura gutxituaren emariari. PT baten adibidea litzateke hizkuntza maioritario lehiakideko H1-hiztun bat, aukera izan duena dentsitate altuko H1-gutxiengoaren hartu-eman sozialetan aktiboki parte hartzeko eta elkarrekintza sozialei esker GutxHko hainbat gaitasun eskuratzeko. PTak eta hizkuntza gutxitua H2 moduan ikasten ari diren hiztunak ez dira berdinak; izan ere, H2-hiztunek eskola bidezko input pedagogikoen beharra izaten dute normalean.



Dinamika sozialak: Neokulturako Parte-hartzaileak gutxiengoaren testuinguruan

4. irudian ere, beste zirkuluerdi bat gehitu zaio dinamika sozialari: kultura maioritarioari datzekion eta marra etenez apaindutako zirkuluerdiak GutxHaren Neokulturari dagozkion Parte-hartzaileak irudikatzen ditu. Zirkuluerdi horrek, beraz, H2k gutxiengoaren gizarte-egoeran duen dimentsioa irudikatzen du, eta H2-ikasleen eta hiztunen elkarrekintzek gutxiengoaren dinamikan dituzten ondorioak. Neokulturako Parte-hartzaileek (NeoP) badituzte beren berezitasunak bai H1-hiztunekin eta bai Kultura Tangentzialeko Parte-hartzaileekin alderatuta, ez baitute bizi izan H1-hiztunek esperimentatzen duten 1. GKko lehen sozializazioa, ez 2. GKko bigarren sozializazioa, ezta PTen gizarte-esperientzia partziala ere (GutxHa adiskide talde baten barruan praktikatzeari esker lortua). Oro har, NeoPek hizkuntza gutxituko identitate bat bereganatzen edo aldarrikatzen dute, GutxHko eskolatzeko jartzen diren bitarteko curricular eta pedagogikoez baliatu direlako, bai hizkuntza maioritarioaren eskola-sisteman GutxHko klaseak hartuz, bai GutxHko murgiltze-programetan matrikulatuz. NeoPek dinamikan eragin onuragarria dutela esaten da haien kezkak bat datozenean H1-gutxiengoaren eta PTen kezekin. Hori gertatzen da askotan NeoPen interesak zabalagoak direnean; alegia, ez direnean mugatzen hizkuntza gutxitua eskolako ikasgai soil gisa ikastera.

Gutxiengoaren dinamika sozial eta kulturalako parte-hartzaileak gehiengoaren testuinguru sozial eta kulturean (ber)asimilatzea

BEaren inguruko HizDG markoak kultura maioritorioranzko bultzada asimilatzailea ere aztertzen eta deskribatzen du, GutxHko parte-hartzaile ugariekin lotuta. Presio asimilatzaile askotariko hauek HizDGri buruzko jatorrizko artikuluko 7. irudiaren azalpenean eztabaidatu ziren (cf. Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2025, 49-51. or.), non azaltzen baitzen nolako indar asimilatzailea sufritzen duten Gutxiengoak, Kultura Tangentzialak eta Neokulturak Kultura Maioritarioarekin eta haren dinamika sozialekin bat egin dezaten. Jatorrizko HizDG artikuluko 7. irudiak, funtsean, gizarte maioritarioek gutxiengoetako hiztunak asimilatzeke edonon egiten duten presioa adierazten du. Fenomeno hau bereziki nabarmena da hizkuntza-aldaketaren dinamika sozial kaltegarria pairatzen ari diren gutxiengo linguistiko mehatxatuen kasuan.

Presio asimilatzaile hauen arrazoiaren artean daude hiztun maioritarioek hiztun minoritarioen dinamika positiboetan eragiten duten haustura, eta hiztun

minoritarioek GKetan zehar egiten duten mugimendu progresiboan hiztun maioritarioek eragiten duten etena. Adibidez, hizkuntza maioritarioaren hiztun elebazarrek hiztun minoritarioen eskolatzean parte hartzen badute, ondorioa honako hau izango da ia beti: hizkuntza maioritaria izango da lehen hezkuntzako ikasleen *lingua franca*, eta horrek eragotzi egingo du hiztun minoritario gazteen bilakabide etenik gabea 2. GKko adiskide taldeen arteko sendotze sozialeko prozesuetan barna. Hiztun minoritario gazteen kasuan, haien hizkuntza etxeko erabilerara mugatuko da, eta funtzio sozial zabalagoak murriztuta edukiko ditu. GutxHaren funtzio soziala familia-unitate gero eta isolatuagoetara eta testuinguru formaletara murrizten joatea oso prozesu ohikoa da hizkuntza-aldaketa gertatzen den testuinguruetan. Halere, hizkuntza-aldaketa azken fasean baldin badago, parte-hartzaileen dinamika sozialak desberdintzea alferrikakoa da; izan ere, kultura maioritario menderatzailearen baitarako asimilazioa bihurtzen da gizarte-aukera bideragarri bakarra.

Eztabaida

Markoak eta ereduak beren ekarpen heuristikoaren arabera neurtzen dira: irudikatu nahi dituzten egoera eta aldagai esanguratsu gehienak (edo guztiak) biltzen al dituzte? Kasu horretan, hemen eztabaidatutako dinamika sozialaren teoriak deskribatzen, azaltzen eta auresaten al ditu gutxiengo baten BEaren etorkizuneko aukerak sustatzeko gizarte-fenomenoak? Hala bada, beharbada helburu praktiko (normatibo) bat ere eskain dezakete talde etnolinguistiko baten gizarte-iraunkortasuna areagotzeko politika eta programa eraginkorrak iradokiz. Gure ekarpena akademikoa da: espero dugu gure HizDG markoak lagunduko duela aurreko beste marko batzuk hobetzen, bereziki hauek: Fishman, 1991, 2001; Landry *et al.*, 2022; Bourhis & Landry, 2008; eta Lewis & Simons, 2016. Gure markoa BEari buruzko bibliografiaren inguruan (eta beste marko batzuen inguruan) egiten dugun kritikan oinarritzen da, bai eta landa-laneko esperientzian eta GutxHen testuinguruetan egindako GutxHPPen analisisian ere (cf. Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2007a,b; Ó Giollagáin & Charlton, 2015; Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2020; Bourgeois, 2024a, 2024b). HizDG teoria estrukturalak ekarritako hobekuntza hauxe da: norbanakoak funtsezko garapen-etapa (GK) batzuetan barrena egiten duen bilakabidea azaltzen duela eta aldi berean paraleloki gertatzen diren garapen-prozesu sozial indartzaileak ere adierazten dituela (ikusi 1. irudia), eta horrek soziolinguistikoki esanguratsuak diren Printzipio Orokor (PO) batzuk agerrarazten ditu, besteak beste hizkuntza gutxituaren eta hizkuntza maioritarioaren hiztun eta taldeen artean egiten den baliabide-banaketa konparatiboa. HizDG markoa, beraz, norbanakoak gizartean duen interakzioan eta gizarteak norbanakoarengan duen eraginean zentratzen da.

Gure HizDG markoa frogetan oinarritua eta unibertsalizatzailea da (testuinguru moderno eta modernizatzaileentzat), eta metodo egituratu baliagarri bat eskaintzen du BEa hobetzeko politikak eraikitze eta gutxiengoaren egoerak gaur egun pairatzen dituzten eraginak ebaluatze. Implizituki, marko honek iradokitzen du GutxHPP eraginkor batek 1-4 GKen eta lau POen integrazio holistiko gisa funtzionatuko duela, norbanakoak eta talde etnolinguistikoak aintzat hartuko dituen osotasun bat helburutzat hartuz, eta 1. eta 2. GKen sortze-garrantzia azpimarratuz. 3. eta 4. GKak 1. eta 2. GKetako sozializazio-prozesu formatiboen gainean eraikitzen dira. Hori dela eta, 3. eta 4. GKak lehenestea, 1. eta 2. GKen kaltetan, ez da oso bide eraginkorra ahalik eta gizarte-eremutik onuragarrienak ekoizteko edo HPPetatik eremutik ahalik eta errentagarrienak lortzeko (cf. Grin, 2003, 2024).

BEa aztertzearen dinamika sozial berri honen beharra arrazoi honengatik sortu zen: gero eta agerikoagoa zelako «errealitate-arrakala» bat zegoela GutxHak sustatzeko xede formalen eta hiztun-komunitate errealean egiten ziren GutxHPP aniztasunaren eragin faltaren artean (cf. Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2020, 2007a, 2007b; Ó Giollagáin & Caimbeul, 2021; Lenoach *et al.*, 2012; Ó Giollagáin & Ó Curnáin, 2016; Brookes & Roberts, 2013; Ó Riagáin, 2008; Iurrebaso, 2023¹⁰; Bourgeois, 2024b). Era berean, xede hauekin proposatzen dugu BEari buruzko marko berri hau: a) hiztun minoritarioen errealitatearen diagnostiko sozialki doituagoak bultzatzea; eta b) testuinguru analitiko bat eskaintzea GutxHPPak birformulatzeko, gai izan daitezkeen GutxHek gaur egungo gizartean bizi duten arrisku-egoeraren ondoriozko arazoei aurre egiteko (cf. Bradley & Bradley, 2019, 1-5. or.). Hizkuntza-sustapen indibidualizatua (edo sarri atomizatua) egitea, GutxH-komunitatearen babesaren kostura, arriskutsua izan daiteke, alde batera utz dezakeelako gutxiengo linguistikoak entitate etnolinguistiko galkorrak direlako errealitate agerikoa. Baldin eta talde etnolinguistiko batek ez badauka edo ez badu sortzen aski trebetasun sozial (pertsona arteko), gizarteko, kultural, instituzional eta politiko, ezta horiekin lotuta dauden eta jokabide indibidual eta kolektiboak egituratzen eta orientatzen dituzten aski gaitasun kolektibo ere belaunaldiz belaunaldi gizarte-dentsitate gutxieneko batean irauteko eta indarberritzeko (cf. Ó Curnáin & Ó Giollagáin, 2024; Bastardas-Boada, 2013, 161. or.), ezinbestean murriztuko dira gutxiengo linguistikoek beren burua talde etnolinguistiko desberdin gisa iraunarazteko dituzten aukerak.

10. Ikusi, halaber, Hizkuntza Berdintasunerako Europako Sareak nola babestu zuen Euskalgintzaren Kontseiluak euskal hiztunen komunitatea «larrialdi linguistikoan» zegoela adieraziz egindako ebazpena: <https://elen.ngo/2024/11/12/elen-backs-kontseilua-resolution-that-basque-is-in-a-linguistic-emergency/>

Hizkuntzak sozialki galkorrak direnez, funtsezkoa da ulertzea zein dinamika sozialen bidez defendatzen edo mantentzen duten hiztunek BEa iraunkortasun kolektiborako garrantzitsuenak diren gizarte-esferetan. Norbanakoak hizkuntza gutxituko aukerez edo praktika sinbolikoez balia daitezen erakundeetako diru publikoa eta giza baliabideak xahutzea zentzuzkoa izan dadin estrategikoki eta finantzarioki, ezinbestekoa da aldi berean garatzea gutxiengo bernakular bat sufritzen ari den beherakada demolinguistikoa leuntzeko xedez antolaturiko politika- eta sostengu-marko bat. GutxHen gizarte-erronka hau ofizialki onartzea lehen urrats garrantzitsua litzateke GutxH-hiztunek beren komunitatearen desagertzearen inguruan dituzten kezka kolektiboak baretzeko (cf. Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2020, 5. kapitulua).

Orain arte garatu diren BE markoak mugatuak direla iruditzen zaigu, ez dietelako behar adinako garrantzia ematen honako alderdi hauei: a) GutxHen praktikak gobernatzen eta sostengatzen dituzten gizarte-prozesu ugarietan (1. GKko lehen sozializazioan, 2. GKko bigarren sozializazioan, 3. GKko indartze zibikoan eta 4. GKko gutxiengo kulturalarekiko atxikimendu eta afiliazio psikosozialen prozesuetan) garatzen diren elkarreraginezko eta etapa arteko dinamika sozialak; b) prozesu horietako parte-hartze emankorraren etapa arteko interdependentzia GutxHaren dinamika sozial orokorrean GK batetik bestera modu positiboan aurrera egiteko; eta c) konplexutasun orokorren analisi zientifiko holistikoak. Beharrezkoa da dinamika sozial hauek barne hartuko dituen eta bilakabide dinamikoa erraztuko duen eredu berri bat. Hizkuntza gutxituen planifikazio-zikloa (Gazzola *et al.*, 2024: 4-5 lanean eztabaidatzen dena), esaterako, gure eredu sistemikoko 3. GKko prozesu eta ekimenen barruan sartuko litzateke nagusiki. Hala ere, 4. GKko kezkei erantzuteko sortutako ereduetatik eratorritako hizkuntza-politika ez guztiz egokiek, askotan, axolagabekeria edo alferkeria eragin dezakete 3. GKko kezkei erantzuteko egindako eta hasieran positibotzat jotako GutxHPP-gomendioetan. 4. GKranzko bilakabidea eragozten duten 3. GKko oztopo horien ondorioz, 4. GKko hizkuntza-politiketako dinamika sozial kronikoek baliogabetu egin ditzakete 3. GKko asmo zibikoak eta ahalegin instituzionalak, bereziki gutxiengo linguistikoaren gizarte-hondoratzea agerikoa denean. (Ikusi Fishman (1991, 143. or.) HPParen «irlandizazio»-arazoaz: gure terminologia erabiliz, esan liteke 3. GKa lehenesteak, diskurtso post estrukturalisten eraginez, konpromiso instituzional sinbolikoa eskaintzen diela gutxiengo linguistikoei, baina ez diola behar besteko indarrez aurre egiten haien asimilazio (post) modernoari, hots, hizkuntza nagusiaren gizarte-normatibitateak gutxiengo horiek bereganatzeko duen joerari, zeina gure 1-4. GKetan deskribatzen baita). Labur esanda: 3. GKko kezka zibikoak 1-4. GKen osotasunaren kostura lehenestea ez da eraginkorra GutxHPP gisa.

HizDG markoak erreflexibitate (post)modernoko prozesuak deskribatzen ditu; izan ere, kontuan hartzen ditu GutxHen egungo kondizioak, zeinek ezegonkortasuna bultzatzen baitute eta aldi berean gutxiengo eta gehiengo linguistikoen hiztun eta taldeen arteko elkarreragin soziokultural, ekonomiko, politiko, demolinguistiko eta identitarioei erantzuteko tresna analitikoak eta esku-hartze praktikoak determinatzen baitituzte. Aitortu beharra dago, halere, GutxHPP formala eginezina edo gauzaezina dela talde etnolinguistiko gehienentzat, HizDG osasuntsuagoa duen «GehiHPP nagusi bakar baten mende daudelako» (Ó Curnáin & Ó Giollagáin, 2024, 405. or.). Arazo modernoak konpontzeko, tresna modernoak erabili behar dira. 1. iruditik 4.erako bilakabidea modernitateko konplexifikazio soziolinguistikoko prozesuen isla da, non bereziki 3. eta 4. GKen intentsitatea handitzen baita eta, ondorioz, baita haien gizarte-garrantzia ere. Marko orokorrak, bestalde, tresna analitiko bat ere eskaintzen du arazo hauen inguruko eztabaida eta ikusmolde akademiko, politiko eta zibikoak argitzeko, bereziki GutxHen ezegonkortasunari buruzkoak.

HPPek estrategikoki aztertu eta aintzat hartu beharko lukete gizarteko dinamika minoritarioen hedadura guztia, arreta guztia 3. GKan jartzeko joera pragmatikoaz harago. HPP postestrukturalista, ordea, uzkur agertu izan da halako eginbideen aurrean. Errezelo horiek azaltzen dute zergatik hautematen duten H1-gutxiengo linguistikoek halako alferkeria eta autoritate falta GutxHaren sustapen formalean. HPP postestrukturalista hori are arazotsuagoa gertatzen da testuinguru neoliberaletan (cf. Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2020; Ó Giollagáin & Ó Curnáin, 2024; MacLean, 2022; eta Ó Giollagáin & Caimbeul, 2021, 190-191. or. GutxHen «klase erreferenteen» inguruan). HPP Sinbolikoa ez da epe luzera onuragarria gertatzen talde etnolinguistiko mehatxatuentzat, ez baitu behar besteko arreta jartzen gutxiengoen gizarte-iraunkortasunerako estrategikoak diren lau baldintza nagusietan:

- Desabantailan dagoen gutxiengo linguistikoaren gizarte-baldintzak betetzeko beharrezkoa(k) d(ir)en egitura soziopolitiko kolektiboa(k).
- Gutxiengoko kideen artean agentibitate sozial indibidual eta kolektiboa hedatzeko antolaketa-mekanismoak.
- GutxH-hiztunen gaitasun sozioekonomikoa sostengatzeko ekimen koope-ratiboak diseinatzeko eta ezartzeko gaitasun eta baliabide estrategikoak.
- Talde-lidergo zuhur bat gai izango dena gutxiengoko kideen artean leialtasuna sustatzeko GutxH-kolektibo etnolinguistikoa iraunarazteko.

Gehiengo linguistikoek beren abantailarako naturalizatzen eta optimizatzen dituztenez gaitasun politiko, sozioekonomiko eta gizarteko hauek HizDG optimoetan, lau baldintza horiek betetzeko indar edo gaitasun ahula duten gutxiengo linguistikoak ez dira bizirik irtengo (post)modernitateko eraldaketetatik.

Ondorioa

HizDG markoak ikusmolde sozial dinamiko analitiko bat proposatzen du BEa bermatzen duten GKak aztertzeke. Gure markoak gutxiengo linguistiko baten bideragarritasuna edo zaurgarritasuna determinatzen duten funtsezko prozesu sozial eta formal osagarrien multzo gisa irudikatzen du talde linguistiko baten iraunkortasuna: dinamika sozial/formal positiboek mesede egiten diote taldearen bideragarritasunari, eta prozesu dinamiko negatibo edo murriztaileek, berriz, gutxiengo linguistikoaren gizarte-gainbehera eta desagertzea eragiten dituzte. BEa, HizDG markoaren arabera, gutxiengo linguistiko batek lehen eta bigarren sozializazio-prozesu sozial funtsezkoak (gutxiengoaren hizkuntza eta kapital kulturalaren transferentzia sozializatua bermatzen dutenak) sortzeko eta bultzatzeko duen gaitasunaren gizarte-ezaugarri emergente bat da. HizDG markoaren araberrako BEak GutxHen eta haien kulturen Sendotze Zibikoa ere aztertzen du, bai eta identitate kolektibo koherente baten parte izatearen sentsazio esanguratsua sortzen duten afiliazio-prozesuak ere. BEa, beraz, talde batek bere gizarte-jarraitutasunaren oinarri diren eta elkarri lotuta dauden prozesu sozial, instituzional, zibiko eta afiliatibo funtsezkoak sortzeko eta sostengatzeko duen antolaketa-erraztasunaren gizarte-emaizta gisa gauzatzen da. Norbanakoarengana bideratutako eta sektore jakinei lotutako esku-hartzeek ez dute lortuko GutxH baten BEa bermatzea, eta gauza bera gertatuko da iraunkortasuna mantentzera bideratutako xede holistiko, komunal eta epe luzekoak (hainbat belaunalditakoak) ezartzen ez dituzten beste HPP batzuekin.

Gure HizDG BE markoak iradokitzen du gaur egungo HPPEk GutxHak babesteko hartzen dituzten neurrien alderdi asko sakonki berrikusi behar direla GutxHIBASUa¹¹ GutxHen gizarte-iraunkortasun egingarri baten hasierako diseinu honetan azaldutako garapen-dinamika sozial eta formaletara egokitzeke.

HizDG markoa aplikatzeak esan nahi du:

- a) Egungo GutxHPPetako arretagune-mailak aztertzea HizDG markoari begira.
- b) GKetako dinamika sozialetara eta BE-emaizta optimoagoetara hobeto egokitzen diren GutxHPPak diseinatzea.

11. Gutxiengo Hizkuntzen Babes eta Sustapena.

- c) Ebaluazio kuantitatibo eta kualitatiboak egitea galdeketa demolinguistiko eta soziolinguistiko bidez, aztertzeko zenbaterainokoa den HizDG markoko lau GKetako dinamika sozialekiko eta haien BE-emaitzekiko gaur egungo benetako konpromisoa (eta ez soilik edo nagusiki sinbolikoa)
- d) BEaren inguruko ikerketetan oinarritzen diren eta dagoeneko martxan dauden GutxHPPak doitzea eta egokitzea.

Zalantzarik gabe, orain arte egindako ikerketek (adibidez Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2020; cf. Mac Giolla Chríost, 2022) erakutsia dute jada beharrezkoa dela GutxHPPek arreta handiagoa eta esanguratsuagoa jartzea ideologikoki koherenteak diren irtenbide holistiko eta mailakatueta. HizDG markoak gizartean oinarritutako alternatiba emankor bat eskaintzen du HPP sinbolikoaren geldotasun soziopolitikoari aurre egiteko. GutxHetako adin-talde eta norbanakoen lehen eta bigarren sozializazioa GutxHen sustapen eta babes formalera integratzeko egiten diren ahaleginek berebiziko garrantzia dute gutxiengo linguistikoaren gizarte-etorkizunarentzako berme sinesgarriak izateko. HPP sinbolikoak ez dienez modu egokian aurre egiten gutxiengoaren iraunkortasun etnolinguistikoak pairatzen dituen gizarte-mehatxuei, argi dago GutxH-hiztunek eta haien komunitateek eredu emankorrago bat behar dutela erronkei aurre egiteko eta gizarte pluralen barruan beren iraunkortasuna bermatzeko modu egingarriak diseinatzeko.

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4. Frantsesa Kanadan: hiztun-dentsitatea eta hizkuntzaren erabilera, transmisioa eta ezagutza

Étienne Lemyre (Statistique Canada¹)

Laburpena: Frantsesa hizkuntza ofiziala da Kanadan ingelesarekin batera. Alabaina, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten herritarrek (bakarrik nahiz beste hizkuntza batekin) estatu osoko populazioaren gutxiengo bat osatzen dute (% 20,9) probintzia eta lurralde guztietan, Quebecen izan ezik (% 77,8). Maila lokalean, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten quebecar gehienak frantsesa nagusi den auzoetan bizi dira, non frantsesdunek² populazioaren erdia baino gehiago osatzen duten (% 93,4); estatuko gainerako eremuetan, berriz, frantsesdunak populazioaren laurden bat dira soilik (% 25,4). Frantsesdunen proportzioa handiagoa den auzoetan, probabilitate handiagoa dago frantsesdunek frantsesa erabil dezaten etxeko hizkuntza nagusi moduan, probabilitate txikiagoa heldu frantsesdunek bikote linguistikoki mistoak osa ditzaten, eta gurasoek kopuru handiagotan transmititzen diete frantsesa hurrei bai familia elebakarretan, bai hizkuntza bat baino gehiago hitz egiten dituzten familietan. Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez duten pertsonen artean, frantsesdun-proportzio handiko auzoetan bizi direnek aukera gehiago dituzte etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat frantsesa hartzeko edo frantsesa bigarren hizkuntza moduan ikasteko. Horrelako loturak Quebecen eta Quebecetik kanpo ikusi badira ere, frantsesak Quebecen duen gehiengo-estatusa eta Kanadako beste tokietan duen gutxiengo-estatusa argi islatzen dira emaitzetan, auzo-mailan frantses hiztunen tokiko kontzentrazioa edozein delarik ere.

Gako-hitzak: frantsesa, Kanada, Quebec, hiztun-dentsitatea, ama-hizkuntza, etxeko hizkuntza, hizkuntza-transmisioa, hizkuntza-ezagutza.

1. Testu honetan plazaratzen diren iritziak autorearenak dira, eta ez datoz nahitaez bat Statistique Canada erakundearenekin

2. Itzulpenean, laburtasunaren eta erosotasunaren mesedetan, «frantsesdun» terminoa erabili da ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten eta oraindik erabiltzen duten hiztunak izendatzeko, alegia, ingelesezko «people whose mother tongue is French», «French-mother-tongue people» eta «native French speakers» itzultzeko [itzultzailearen oharra].

Sarrera

Kanadan ehunka hizkuntza hitz egiten dira, tartean hirurogeita hamar baino gehiago jatorriz herrialde horretakoak. Hala ere, frantsesa eta ingelesa dira Kanadan gehien ezagutzen eta erabiltzen diren hizkuntzak, eta bi hizkuntzek dute estatus ofiziala maila federalean 1969az geroztik. Kanadako bi hizkuntza ofizialak herrialde osoko komunitateetan hitz egiten diren arren, frantses-hiztunak Quebecoko probintzian baino ez dira gehiengo; gainerako probintzia eta lurraldeetan, frantsesa gutxiengo-egoeran dago, baita Kanada osoari dagokionez ere.

Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadan, hainbat ikerketak erakutsi dute badagoela erlazio bat frantses-hiztunek maila lokalean duten proportzio erlatiboaren eta hizkuntzaren erabileraren artean (Marmen, 2005; Castonguay, 2005; Corbeil *et al.*, 2007), baina, erlazio horrek Quebecen berdin funtzionatzen ote duen ikusteko, ikerketa gehiago behar da. Pisu demografikoa maila lokalean berdina izanik, antzekoak al dira frantsesaren erabileraren, transmisioaren eta ezagutzaren adierazle demolinguistikoak?

Kapitulu honek Kanadako erroldako zenbait hizkuntza-kontzeptu aztertzen ditu laburki, eta aurkezten du nolako garapena izan duten 1991tik 2021era ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten edo frantsesez badakiten quebecarren eta beste kanadar batzuen kopuruak eta proportzioak. Ondoren, honako alor hauetako adierazleak erakusten ditu: ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen kontzentrazioa maila lokalean; frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza gisa mantentzeko edo hartzeko joera; bikote linguistikoki mistoen intzidentzia; guraso eta haurren arteko frantsesaren transmisioa eta frantsesaren ezagutza bigarren hizkuntza moduan. Ondorioetan, Quebecen eta Quebecetik kanpoko lurralde kanadarraren arteko antzekotasunak eta desberdintasunak eztabaidatzen dira.

Kanadako erroldako hizkuntza-kontzeptuak

Herriarren Errolda bost urtetik behin egiten da Kanadan, etxe bakoitzera galdetegi bat bidalita. Munduko errolden artean, hizkuntzei buruzko galdera gehien dutenen artean dago Kanadakoa (Christopher, 2010). Horri esker, posible da hainbat eta hainbat kontzeptu denbora-tarte luze batean aztertzea.

*Ama-hizkuntzat*zat jotzen da etxean haurtzaroan ikasitako lehen hizkuntza, baldin eta errolda egiten den unean oraindik ulertzen bada. Pertsona batek ez badu jada ulertzen umetan ikasitako lehen hizkuntza, ikasitako bigarren hizkuntza

adierazi behar du³. Ama-hizkuntza gisa bi hizkuntza markatu behar dira baldin eta hiztunak hizkuntza horiek aldi berean ikasi bazituen etxean eskolan hasi aurretik.

Erroldan, kanadarrek beren *etxeko hizkuntza* zein den ere adierazi behar dute. Etxean egunerokoan hizkuntza bat baino gehiago erabiltzen dituztenek, gainera, gehien hitz egiten dutena zein den adierazi behar dute. Informazio horri esker, ondorioztatzen da zein den kanadarren etxeko hizkuntza nagusia (etxean gehien hitz egiten den hizkuntza) eta zein diren etxeko bigarren hizkuntzak (egunerokoan baina ez nagusiki hitz egiten direnak). Etxean bi hizkuntza hitz egiten direla adierazi behar da baldin eta biak maiztasun berarekin hitz egiten badira.

Erroldak *hizkuntzen ezagutzari* buruzko informazioa ere biltzen du. Hiztun batek hizkuntza baten ezagutza duela adierazi behar du baldin eta gai bada hizkuntza horretan luzera jakin bateko elkarrizketa bat izateko hainbat gairen inguruan.

Goian deskribatutako kontzeptuez gain, beste informazio hau ere biltzen du Kanadako erroldak: lehen eta bigarren hezkuntza hizkuntza ofizial minoritarioan (ingelesez Quebecen, frantsesez Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadan) eta hizkuntzen erabilera lanean⁴.

Frantsesa Kanadan: azkenaldiko joerak

Frantsesez dakiten kanadarren kopuruak hazten jarraitzen du errolda batetik bestera; 1991n 8,5 milioi izatetik 10,7 milioi izatera igaro ziren 2021ean (Statistics Canada, 2023a). Hala ere, frantsesez ez zekiten herritarren kopuruak bizkorrago egin zuenez gora, Kanadako frantses-hiztunen proportzio erlatiboak jaitsiera txiki bat izan zuen: 1991n % 31,5 eta 2021ean % 29,1.

Quebecen, herritar gehienak gai ziren frantsesez elkarrizketa bat izateko 2021ean (% 93,7); proportzioa ozta-ozta aldatu zen 1991ko datuekin alderatuta (% 93,6). Soilik frantsesez⁵, eta ez ingelesez, dakiten quebecarren proportzioa jaisten ari da (1991n % 58,1 ziren eta 2021ean % 47,3), eta frantsesa eta ingelesa,

3. Kanadarrek erroldan ama-hizkuntzatzat markatzen duten hizkuntza errolda betetzeko unean oraindik ulertu behar dutenez, erroldatik kanpo gera daiteke hiztun batek haurtzaroan ikasitako baina ondoren «ahaztutako» lehen hizkuntza. Fenomeno hau nahiko arraroa da, eta haurtzaroan ikasitako lehen hizkuntza oso gutxitan erabiltzen dutenen artean gertatzen da. Maizago gertatzen da gutxiengo frantsesdunetan eta bigarren belaunaldiko immigranteen artean (ikus Lepage, 2011).

4. Lanean erabiltzen diren hizkuntzen inguruko informazioa biltzeko, errolda-galdetegi xehe bat bidaltzen da etxean % 25etara.

5. Gai izan litezke elkarrizketa bat izateko frantsesa edo ingelesa ez den beste hizkuntza batean ere.

biak hitz egiteko gai direnen proportzioa, berriz, gorantz doa (1991n % 35,4 eta 2021ean % 46,4). Horren arrazoia, hein handi batean, zera da, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten hiztunek ingelesa ikasten dutela (Lemyre, 2023). Quebecetik kanpo, 2021ean, kanadarren % 88,0 gai ziren ingelesez elkarriketa bat izateko, baina ez frantsesez hitz egiteko. Aitzitik, % 9,9k zekizkiten bi hizkuntzak, frantsesa eta ingelesa, 1991n baino pixka bat gutxiagok (% 10,6). Quebecetik kanpo, oso kanadar gutxi ziren soilik frantsesez zekitenak eta ingelesez hitz egiteko gai ez zirenak (1991n % 0,7 eta 2021ean % 0,4).

Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa zuten kanadarren kopuruak⁶ ere gora egin zuen: 6,6 milioi ziren 1991n eta 7,7 milioi 2021ean (Statistics Canada, 2023b). Baina proportzio erlatiboa, ordea, modu nabarmenagoan jaitsi zen: 1991n % 24,5 ziren eta 2021ean % 20,9. Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa zutenen proportzio erlatiboak antzera egin zuen behera Quebecen (1991n % 82,5 eta 2021ean % 77,8) eta Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadan (1991n % 5,0 eta 2021ean % 3,9). Hainbat faktore hartu behar dira kontuan beherakada horiek azaltzeko, besteak beste ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen zahartzea nabarmenagoa dela populazio orokorrarekin alderatuta, nazioarteko migrazioan frantsesdunak gutxiago izan direla historikoki, eta Quebecetik kanpo gurasoek ez dietela haurrei frantsesa osoki transmititu (Houle & Corbeil, 2017).

Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen banaketa maila lokalean

Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen banaketa ez da uniformea ez Quebecen, ez Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadan. Bai Quebeceko, bai Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadak, frantses-hiztunen kontzentrazio txikiagoko edo handiagoko eskualdeak⁷ dituzte.

Quebeceko eskualde askotan, frantsesduna da populazioaren % 90 gutxienez. Proportzio hori apalxeagoa da Montreal inguruko eremuetan (Montreal da Quebeceko hiririk handiena), mugatik gertuko eskualdeetan⁸ eta Quebec iparraldean. Esaterako, Montrealgo Uhartean, zeinak metropoli-barrutiaren gune nagusia barne hartzen duen, herritarren erdiak baino gutxiago dira frantsesdunak (% 49,3), nahiz eta desberdintasun nabarmenak dauden auzotik auzora⁹.

6. Kopuru horren barruan daude ama-hizkuntza bakartzat frantsesa dutenak eta frantsesaz gain beste ama-hizkuntza bat ere badutenak. Ama-hizkuntza bat baino gehiago dituztenei buruz Kanadako erroldan jasotzen den informazioa eta haren interpretazioa eskuratzeko, ikus Lepage, 2020.

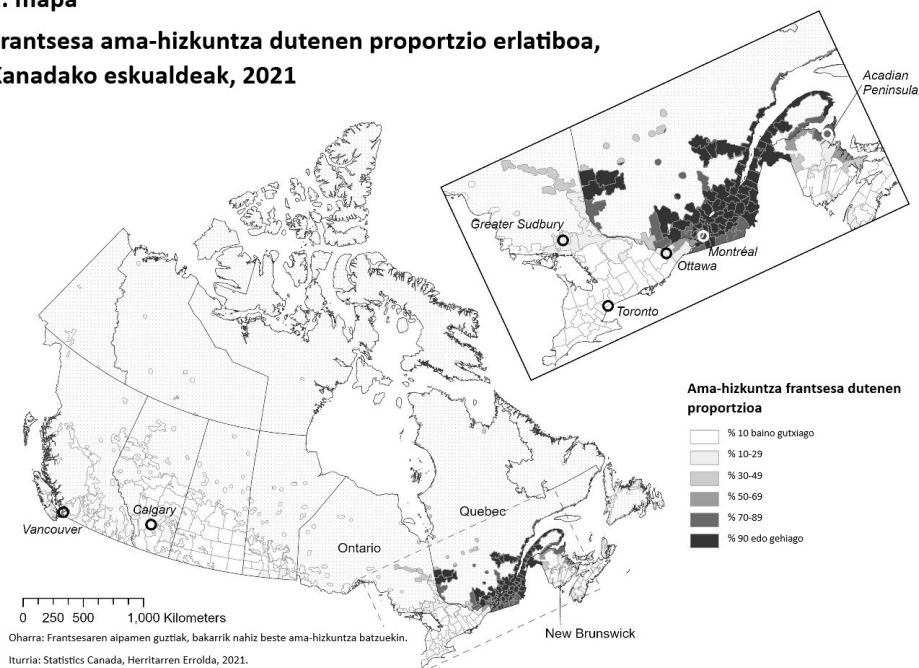
7. Errolda-banaketak dira; alegia, elkarren ondoan dauden udalerrien multzoak, jurisdikzio batzuetan «county» deritzen antzekoak.

8. Adibidez, Pontiac udalerrian (% 41,1), Ontariorekiko mugaren ondoan.

9. Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa zutenen proportzioa, Montrealgo Uhartean, % 6,2 eta % 95,9 artekoa zen 100 biztanletik gorako auzoetan.

1. mapa

Frantsesa ama-hiltuntza dutenen proportzio erlatiboa, Kanadako eskualdeak, 2021



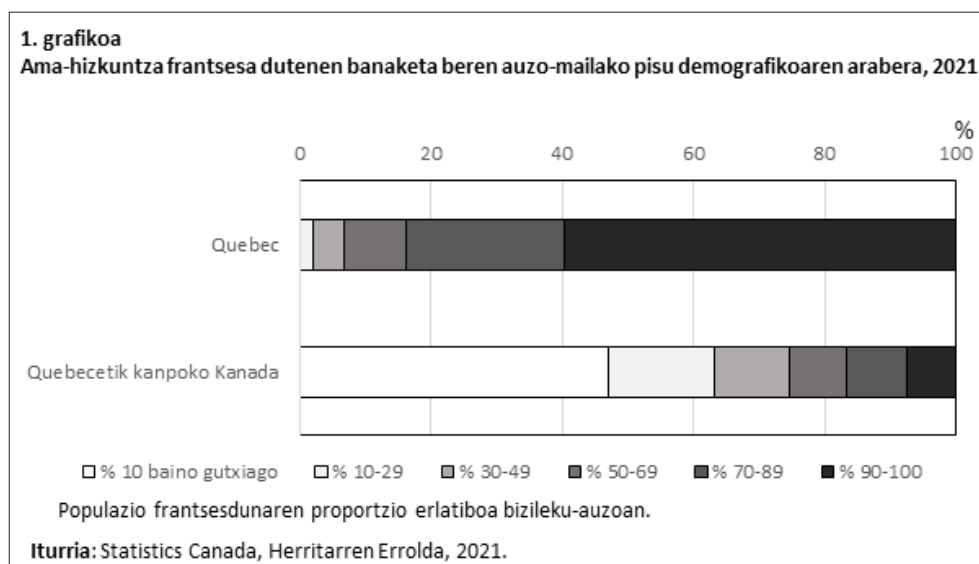
Quebecetik kanpo, ama-hiltuntza frantsesa dutenak populazioaren % 10 baino gutxiago dira. Hori gertatzen da Kanadako hiri handienetan, esaterako Toronton, Vancouverren eta Calgaryn. Kanadako hiriburua, Ottawa, desberdina da zentzu horretan, biztanleen % 15,7k baitute frantsesa ama-hiltuntza¹⁰. Frantsesdunen proportzio handiagoa duten beste eskualde batzuen artean daude, adibidez, Greater Sudbury hiria Ontario iparraldean (% 26,0) eta Penintsula Akadiarra New Brunswick probintzian (% 84,5)¹¹.

Ama-hiltuntza frantsesa dutenen banaketak eskualde-mailan erakusten dituen desberdintasunak auzo¹²-mailan ere islatzen dira. Quebecen, ama-hiltuntza frantsesa duten % 93,4 auzo frantsesdunetan bizi dira, hau da, frantsesdunek populazioaren erdia baino gehiago osatzen duten auzoetan. 5etik 3 inguru, gainera, frantsesdunak % 90etik gora diren auzoetan bizi dira. Quebecar frantsesdunen % 0,1 baino gutxiago bizi dira frantsesdunek tokiko populazioaren % 10 baino gutxiago osatzen duten auzoetan.

10. 100 biztanletik gorako Ottawako auzoetan, proportzio hori % 3,0 eta % 56,0 artekoa da.

11. Proportzio hori Gloucester errolda-barrutiari dagokio, zeinak Penintsula Akadiarraren zatirik handiena hartzen duen.

12. Erroldako auzo-barrutiak dira, alegia, elkarren ondoan dauden etxadien multzoak, batez beste 400 eta 700 biztanle artean dituztenak.



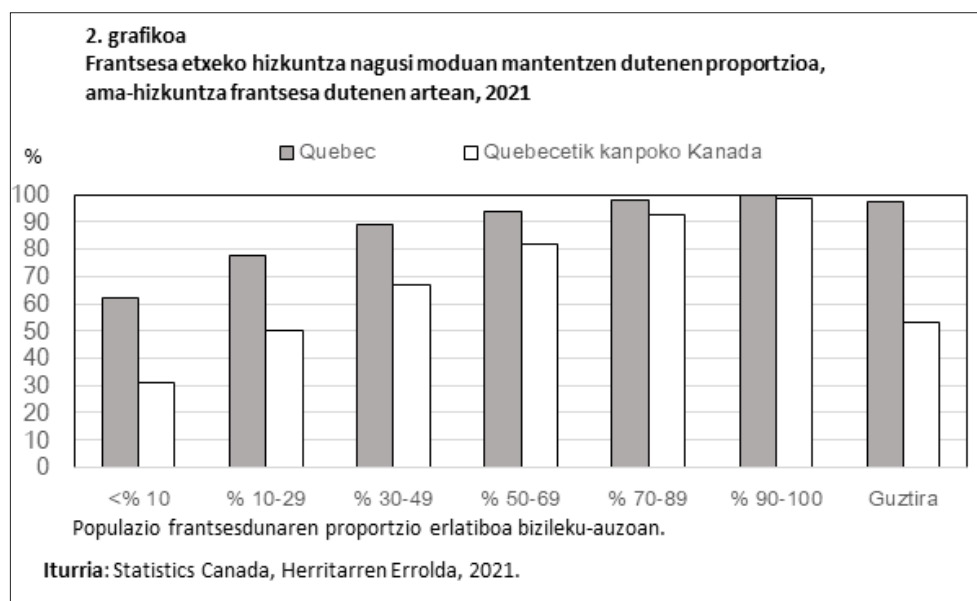
Aitzitik, Quebecetik kanpo, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen ia erdiak (% 47,0) bizi dira frantsesdunen proportzio erlatiboa % 10 baino txikiagoa den auzoetan, eta laurdena inguru (% 25,4), berriz, populazioaren erdia baino gehiago osatzen duten auzoetan. Quebecetik kanpo bizi diren frantsesdunen % 7,7 baino ez dira bizi ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen proportzioa populazioaren % 90 baino handiagoa den auzoetan.

Frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusi gisa mantentzeko edo hartzeko joera

Etxeko hizkuntza nagusi gisa frantsesa erabiltzen jarraitzen duten frantsesdunek aukera handiagoak dituzte hizkuntza hurrengo belaunaldiei pasatzeko. Orain arteko ikerketek erakutsi dute erlazio bat dagoela gutxiengo-egoeran dauden frantses-hiztunen kontzentrazio espazialaren eta etxean hizkuntza mantentzeko probabilitatearen artean (Sabourin & Bélanger, 2015). Hainbat arrazoik azaldu dezakete frantsesa haurtzaroan ikasi zuten herritarrek zergatik uzten dioten beren bizitzan zehar etxean nagusiki frantsesa erabiltzeari, eta zergatik hartzen duten beste hizkuntza bat, gehienetan ingelesa. Arrazoi horien artean daude bikotekidearekin beste hizkuntza bat erabili beharra eta hezkuntza-arrazoiak (Pépin-Filion et al., 2024).

Quebecen, frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusi gisa mantentzeko joera oso zabalduta da: 2021ean, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa zutenen % 97,6k frantsesa erabiltzen zuten nagusiki etxean¹³. Aitzitik, Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadan, frantsesdunen erdiek baino gehixeagok (% 53,3) soilik erabiltzen zuten oraindik nagusiki frantsesa etxean; % 14,0k, berriz, etxean frantsesa erabiltzen jarraitzen zuten batzuetan, baina nagusiki beste hizkuntza bat erabiltzen zuten (gehienek ingelesa), eta % 32,7k ez zuten gehiago frantsesik erabiltzen etxean.

Quebeceko eta Quebecetik kanpoko egoeren arteko desberdintasunak ñabardura gehiago erakusten ditu ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten herritarren proportzio erlatiboa auzo-mailan aztertzean. Frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat mantentzen dutenak gehiago dira frantsesdunen kontzentrazioa handiagoa den auzoetan. Zehatzago esanda, etxean frantsesa mantentzen dutenen proportzioa % 90etik gorakoa da bai Quebecen eta bai Quebecetik kanpo frantsesdunen proportzio erlatiboa % 70etik gorakoa den auzoetan. Frantses-hiztunen kontzentrazioa apalagoa den auzoetan, frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusi moduan mantentzen dutenak kopurua handiagoa da Quebecen Quebecetik kanpo baino. Adibidez, frantsesdunek populazioaren % 10 baino gutxiago osatzen duten eremuetan, quebectar frantsesdunen % 62k frantsesa hitz egiten dute oraindik nagusiki etxean: proportzio hori Quebecetik kanpoko frantsesdunen artean zenbatutako kopuruaren (% 30,9) bikoitza da.

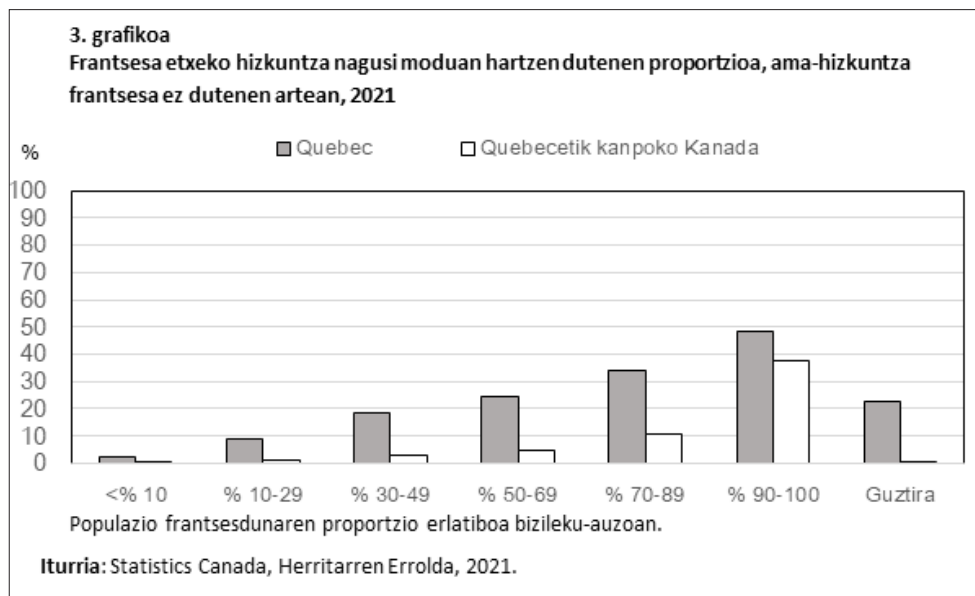


13. Etxean frantsesa hitz egiten zuten nagusiki, edo beste hizkuntza bat bezain maiz.

Hautzaroan frantsesa ikasi ez arren etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat frantsesa hartzen dutenen kopuruak hizkuntzaren erakargarritasuna neurtzeko balio du. Etxeko hizkuntzatzat frantsesa hartzen duten etorkinen artean, gehiago dira frantsesa Kanadan bizitzen jarri aurretik erabiltzen zutenak edota herrialdera iritsi eta lehenengo urteetan bereganatu zutenak (Corbeil & Houle, 2014). Gainera, frantsesez hitz egiten den herrialdeetatik iritsitako etorkinek edota umetan etorri zirenek probabilitate nabarmen handiagoa dute etxeko hizkuntzatzat frantsesa hartzeko (Sabourin & Bélanger, 2015).

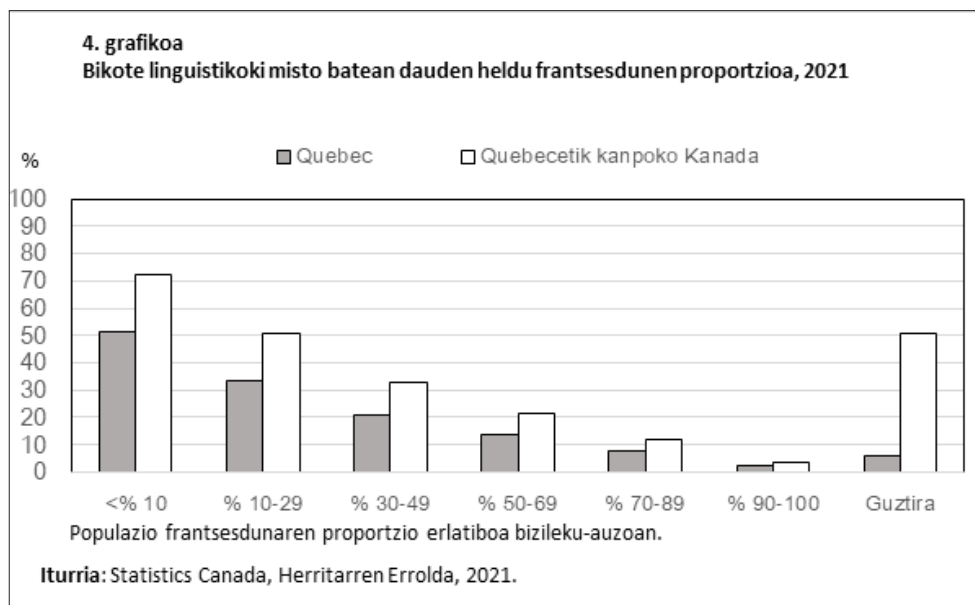
2021ean, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez zuten quebecarren % 22,8k frantsesa erabiltzen zuten nagusiki etxean; Quebecetik kanpo, berriz, proportzio hori % 0,2koa zen soilik.

Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa izan ez arren etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat frantsesa hartu zutenen proportzioa desberdina zen populazio frantsesdunaren auzo-mailako proportzio erlatiboaren arabera. Proportzio hori gutxienez hiru aldiz handiagoa zen Quebecen, Quebecetik kanpo baino, salbu eta frantsesdunek populazioaren % 90 edo gehiago osatzen zuten eskualdeetan. Eskualde horietan, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa izan ez arren etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat frantsesa hartu zutenen proportzioa handiagoa zen Quebecen (% 48,4) Quebecetik kanpo baino (% 37,8), baina desberdintasuna txikiagoa zen beste auzo batzuekin alderatuta.



Bikote linguistikoki mistoak

Bikote linguistikoki mistoetan, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duen heldu batek ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez duen bikotekide bat du. Gorago aipatu bezala, bikote linguistikoki misto bat osatzea da frantsesdunek etxean nagusiki frantsesa erabiltzeari uzteko faktore nagusietako bat, baita kasu askotan frantsesak etxeko hizkuntza izateari utzi bazion ere bikote linguistikoki mistoa osatu baino lehen (Corbeil, 2005). Hizkuntza maioritarioaren ezagutzak eta demografia linguistiko lokalak eragin nabarmena dute bikote linguistikoki misto bat osatzeko probabilitatean, talde linguistikoen arteko harremanen maiztasunarekin lotuta baitaude (Bernard, 1995). Unibertsitate, institutu eta antzeko erakunde ingelesdunetan ikasten dutenek ere probabilitate handiagoa dute bikote linguistikoki misto bat osatzeko ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten gazteen artean (Lemyre, 2025).

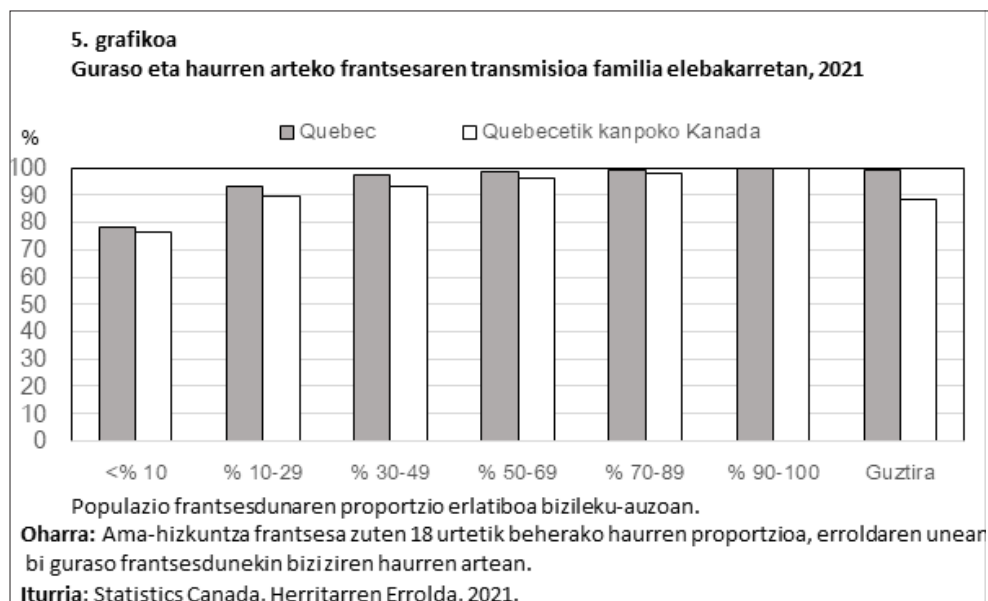


Quebecen, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten eta bikote linguistikoki misto bat osatu duten helduen kopurua apala da (% 5,7); Quebecetik kanpo, berriz, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten helduen erdiek baino gehiagok osatu dute bikote linguistikoki misto bat (% 51,0). Espero izatekoa den bezala, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten helduek probabilitate handiagoa dute bikote linguistikoki mistoak eratzeko frantsesdunen proportzio erlatiboa apalagoa den auzoetan, eta heldu frantsesdunen artean oso gutxi osatzen dituzte bikote linguistikoki mistoak ama-

hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen proportzioa populazioaren % 90 edo handiagoa den auzoetan (% 2,4 Quebecen eta % 3,5 Quebecetik kanpo). Hala ere, frantsesdunen maila lokaleko kontzentrazioa edozein izanik ere, bikote linguistikoki mistoak maizago osatzen dira Quebecetik kanpo Quebecen baino.

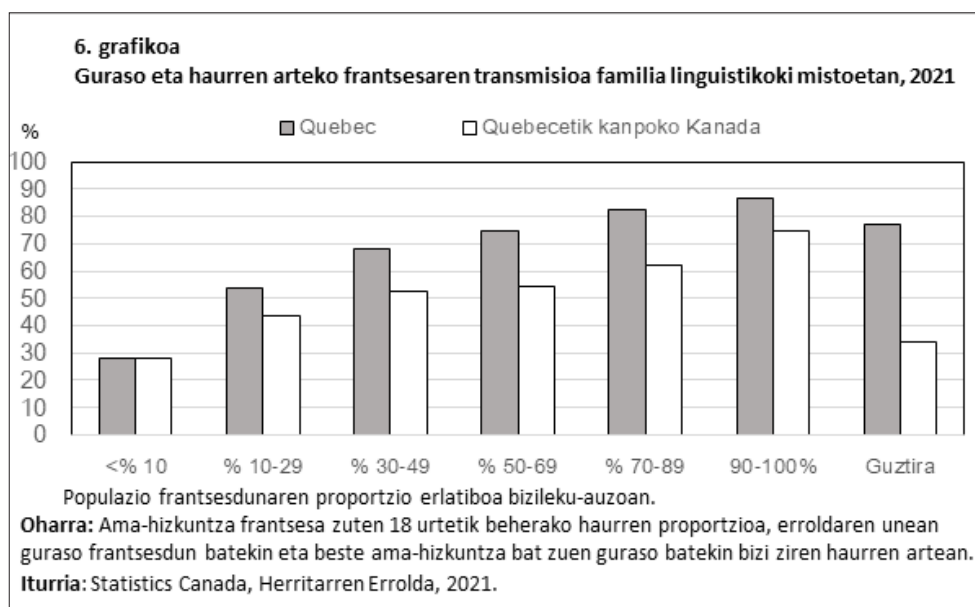
Guraso eta haurren arteko frantsesaren transmisioa

Guraso eta haurren arteko frantsesaren transmisioa neurtzeko, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa zuten 18 urtetik beherako haurren proportzioa kalkulatu zen erroldaren unean bi guraso frantsesdunekin bizi ziren haurren artean. Familia elebakarretako haurrek bi guraso frantsesdun dituzte, eta bikote linguistikoki mistoetako haurrek, berriz, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duen guraso bat dute batetik eta beste ama-hizkuntza bat duen guraso bat bestetik. Frantsesaren transmisioa handiagoa izan ohi da familia elebakarretan; familia linguistikoki mistoetan, berriz, egoera konplexuagoa da. Horrelako kasuetan, amaren hizkuntza izaten da gehienetan haurrek ikasten duten lehen hizkuntza (eta ez aitarena), eta frantsesaren transmisio-tasa aldatu egiten da gurasoen jatorrizko herrialdearen arabera eta bizilekuko demografia linguistikoaren arabera (Bouchard-Coulombe, 2011; Vézina & Houle, 2014).



Familia elebakar frantsesdunetan hazitako haurren gehiengo handi batek frantsesa du ama-hizkuntza, bai Quebecen (% 99,4), bai Quebecetik kanpo (% 88,4). Transmisio-tasa % 90 ingurukoa edo handiagoa izan ohi da frantsesdunek populazioaren % 10 edo gehiago osatzen duten auzoetan. Atalase horretatik behera, guraso eta haurren arteko frantsesaren transmisioa koska bat apalagoa da, bai Quebecen (% 78,0), bai Quebecetik kanpo (% 76,4).

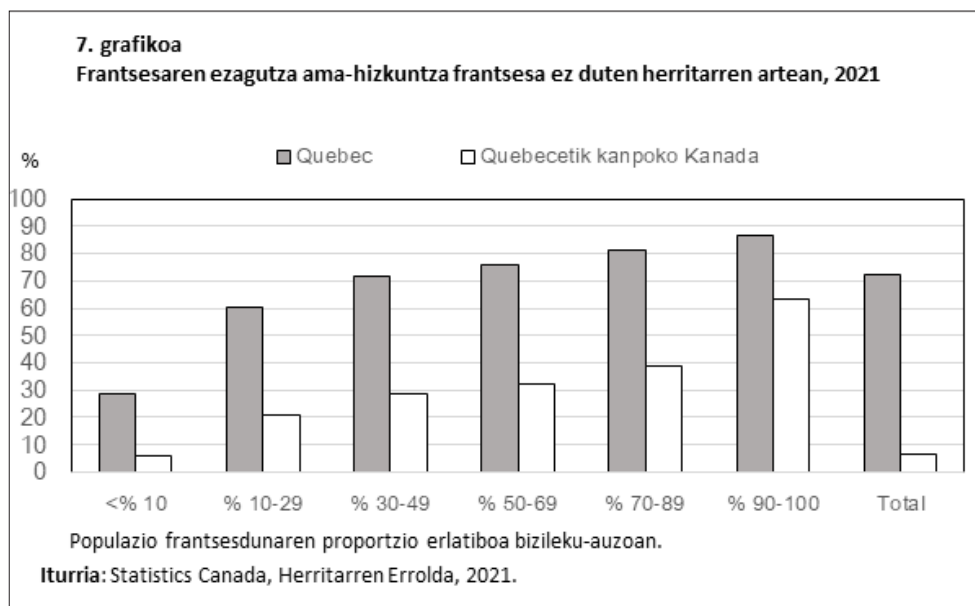
Familia linguistikoki mistoetan, guraso eta haurren arteko frantsesaren transmisioa bi aldiz baino handiagoa da Quebecen (% 77,2) Quebecetik kanpo baino (% 34,3). Quebecen, familia linguistikoki mistoetako haurren erdiek baino gehiagok frantsesa dute ama-hizkuntza frantsesdunek populazioaren % 10 edo gehiago osatzen duten auzoetan; Quebecetik kanpo, berriz, frantsesdunek populazioaren % 30 edo gehiago osatzen duten auzoetan lortzen da atalase hori. Familia linguistikoki mistoetan, frantsesaren transmisioa sistematikoki handiagoa da Quebecen Quebecetik kanpo baino, salbu eta frantsesdunen proportzioa % 10etik beherakoa den auzoetan. Auzo horietan, frantsesaren transmisio-tasak berdinak dira Quebecen eta Quebecetik kanpo (% 27,9).



Frantsesaren ezagutza bigarren hizkuntza moduan

Hautzaroan lehen hizkuntza gisa frantsesa ez beste hizkuntza bat ikasi duten herritar askok bizitzan beranduago ikasten dute frantsesa, adibidez eskolan. Hain zuzen ere, lehen edo bigarren hezkuntzan frantsesezko programetan parte hartzen dutenek askoz probabilitate handiagoa dute Kanadan frantsesa bigarren hizkuntza¹⁴ moduan bereganatzeko (Allen, 2008; Pépin-Filion & Lemyre, 2024). Frantses hitzunik maila lokalean duten presentzia ere faktore erabakigarria da Quebecetik kanpo frantsesaren ezagutza bereganatzeko probabilitatean (Turcotte, 2019).

Ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez zuten quebecarren¹⁵ ia hiru laurdenek (% 72,1) bazekiten frantsesez 2021ean. Aitzitik, Quebecetik kanpo, kanadarren % 6,5 ziren gai frantsesez elkarrizketa bat izateko. Quebecarren proportzio handiago horrek frantsesak probintzia horretan duen gehiengo-estatusa islatzen du.



14. Testuinguru honetan, modu orokor honetan definitzen da bigarren hizkuntza: pertsona batek elkarrizketa bat izateko bezain ondo dakien edozein hizkuntza, baldin eta ez bada hautzaroan lehenengo ikasi zuen eta erroldaren unean oraindik ulertzen duen hizkuntza.

15. Ama-hizkuntza gisa ingelesa edo Kanadan ofiziala ez den hizkuntza bat (bakarrik edo frantsesa ez den beste hizkuntza batekin batera) hitz egiten duten quebecarrak.

Oro har, jende gehiagok ikasten du frantsesa bigarren hizkuntza gisa ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen proportzio erlatiboa handiagoa den auzoetan, nahiz eta desberdintasun handiak dauden Quebecen eta Kanadako gainerako eremuen artean. Quebecen, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez duten baina frantsesez badakiten herriarren proportzioa % 60tik gorakoa da frantsesdunek populazioaren % 10 edo gehiagoosatzen duten auzoetan. Quebecetik kanpo, frantsesdunek populazioaren % 90 edo gehiagoosatzen duten auzoetan baino ez du lortzen frantsesaren ezagutzak proportzio hori (% 60). Frantsesdunek populazioaren % 50 eta % 89 arteanosatzen duten auzoetan, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez duten hiztunen % 40 baino gutxiago dira elkarriketa bat frantsesez izateko gai Quebecetik kanpo.

Ondorioak

Kanadan, 2021eko erroldako datuek erakusten dute auzo-mailan frantsesdunen kontzentrazio handiagoa dagoen lekuetan joera handiagoa dagoela frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat mantentzeko edo hartzeko, joera gutxiago dagoela bikote linguistikoki mistoak sortzeko eta aukera gehiago daudela gurasoek haurrei frantsesa transmititzeko eta frantsesa bigarren hizkuntza moduan ikasteko. Kanada oro har hartuta, frantsesa gutxiengo-egoeran dago, baina Quebecen duen gehiengo-estatusa eta Quebecetik kanpo duen gutxiengo-estatusa argi islatzen dituzte adierazleek, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa dutenen proportzio erlatiboa auzo-mailan edozein delarik ere¹⁶.

Auzo-mailan pisu demografiko berdina izanik, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa duten quebecarrek probabilitate handiagoa dute Quebecetik kanpo bizi diren frantsesdunek baino frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusi moduan mantentzeko, probabilitate txikiagoa dute bikote linguistikoki mistoak osatzeko, eta familia elebakarrek eta linguistikoki mistoek probabilitate handiagoa dute frantsesa beren haurrei transmititzeko. Gainera, ama-hizkuntza frantsesa ez duten hiztunek probabilitate handiagoa dute Quebecen Quebecetik kanpo baino frantsesa ikasteko edo frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat hartzeko.

Nahiz eta badagoen lotura bat hiztun-dentsitate lokalaren eta adierazle demolinguistikoen artean, ezin dugu erlazio kausal bat ondorioztatu. Auzoen osaera lingistikoaren ondoan, norbanako- eta komunitate-mailako beste hainbat faktore ere egon litezke jokoan. Adibidez, frantsesa etxeko hizkuntza nagusitzat hartzeko joera duen jendeak joera handiagoa izan dezake frantses hiztun

16. Salbuespena da guraso eta haurren arteko frantsesaren transmisioa frantsesdunek populazioaren % 10 baino gutxiagoosatzen duten auzoetan bizi diren familia linguistikoki mistoetan: kopuru horiek berdinak dira Quebecen eta Quebecetik kanpo.

gehiagoko auzoetara bizitzera joateko, eta horrek indartu egingo lituzke ikusten ari garen patroiak. Gainera, maila lokaleko hiztun-proportzio erlatiboa ez da hizkuntza baten bizitasunean eragina duen faktore bakarra. Dinamika lokalek frantsesezko erakundeetan parte hartzera bultzakete jendea, baita frantses-hiztunen kontzentrazio erlatiboa apala den eremuetan ere (Gilbert & Langlois, 2006).

Kanadako erroldako beste hizkuntza-kontzeptu batzuk ere azter litezke frantses-hiztunek auzo-mailan duten dentsitatearen arabera: esaterako, azter liteke zenbatekoa den frantsesaren erabilera lanean edo zenbatek egiten duten lehen eta bigarren hezkuntza frantsesez Quebecetik kanpoko Kanadan. Analisi-ikuspegi hori bera aplika lekiok, era berean, Gutxiengo Egoeran dagoen Hizkuntza Ofiziala hitz egiten duen Populazioaren 2022ko Inkestari, zeinak informazioa ematen baitu Quebecetik kanpo eremu pribatuan eta publikoan egiten den frantsesaren erabilerari dagozkion hainbat gairen inguruan, esaterako gobernuko zerbitzuen, osasun-arretaren, justiziaren, kulturaren edo komunitate-jardueren testuinguruan.

Gainera, Kanadako erroldak aukera emango luke aztertzeko zer erlazio duen hiztun-dentsitateak herrialdean hitz egiten diren baina maila federalean ofizialtasunik ez duten beste hizkuntza batzuen egoerarekin, bereziki indigenen hizkuntzen eta etorkinen komunitateek hitz egiten dituzten hizkuntzen egoerarekin.

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5. Continuuma eta kodependentzia: gales-hiztunen dentsitate altuko, ertaineko eta baxuko komunitateen dinamika elkarlotua

Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones (University of Wales Trinity Saint David – ELEN)

Laburpena: Artikulu honek Galesen alor honetako politiketan berriki izandako garapenei buruz hausnartzen du, eta bereziki Galesez Mintzatzen diren Komunitateen Batzordearen lana aztertzen du. Prosiect BRO: gaur egungo galesez mintzatzen diren komunitateen inkesta soziolinguistikoko orokorrak¹ Batzordearen lehenengo eta bigarren faseei (2022-2024, 2024-2026) egindako ekarpenean ere oinarritzen da.

Galesaren eta euskararen testuinguruak alderatzen ditu, funtsezko politika-alorretan egindako aurrerapenen arteko desberdintasunak azpimarratuz, besteak beste hiztun-kopurua handitzean, hezkuntza-sistemaren garapenean eta hizkuntzaren erabilera sozialaren analisian. Bi hizkuntzek erronka handiak dituzte dentsitate altuko eremuen iraunkortasunari dagokionez.

Artikuluak gaur egungo galesez mintzatzen diren komunitateen dinamika elkarlotuak aztertzen ditu, dentsitate altuko, ertaineko eta baxuko eremuetan barrena. Argudiatzen du eremu horiek —behintzat galesaren testuinguruan— elkarri lotuta daudela continuum geolinguistikoen bidez, eta geruza anitzeko kodependentzia sozial, kultural eta ekonomikoetan funtzionatzen dutela. Dentsitate altuko eremuak tradizionalki hizkuntzaren bizindarraren muintzat jo izan diren arren, artikulu honek azpimarratzen du galesaren egungo testuinguruan halako eremuak ez direla hiztun-dentsitate ertaineko edo baxuko eremuetatik isolatuta aritzen. Era berean, dentsitate ertaineko eta baxuko eremuek ere lotura sendoak behar dituzte —continuum geolinguistikoko bat edota kodependentzia sozial, kultural eta ekonomiko bat— dentsitate altuko eremuekin. Galesez mintzatzen diren komunitateak elkarri lotuta daude pertsonen joan-etorrien bidez, ekologia ekonomiko eta kultural saretu eta geolinguistikoko batean. Erlazio horrek iradokitzen du galesak komunitate-hizkuntza gisa izango duen etorkizuna ez dela soilik dentsitate altueneko eremuak sendotzearen araberakoa; galesa herrialde osoan indartzea ere ezinbestekoa da, bai eta continuumaren

1. Prosiect BRO proiektua dentsitate altuko eremuen inguruan egiten ari den lana University of Wales Trinity Saint David, University of the Highlands and Islands eta Oxford University-ren arteko lankidetzan da, Galeseko Gobernuak babestua. <https://www.wales.ac.uk/bro>

eta kodependentziaren kontzientzia hori eztabaidaren eta politikagintzaren erdigunean jartzea ere.

Gako-hitzak hizkuntza-politika, hizkuntza-plangintza (LPP), galesa, hiztun-dentsitatea, arnasgunea.

Sarrera

Artikulu honek Galesen eta galesaren kasua aztertzen du, hizkuntzaren gotorlekuen, hizkuntzaren bihotz-eremuen edo hiztun-dentsitate altuko komunitateen gaiarekin lotuta. Euskararen testuinguruan garatutako «arnasgune» kontzeptu eta markoa ikuspegi galestar batetik arakatuz, artikuluak bi hizkuntzen eta haien egoera soziolinguistikoen arteko alderaketa-puntuak eta desberdintasunak azpimarratzen ditu. Galesak gaur egun dituen lau erronka aurkezten ditu: hiztun-kopurua handitzea, hezkuntza-politika, erabilera soziala eta hiztun-portzentajea altuena duten eremu eta komunitateetan hizkuntzari eustea. Azkenaldiko politikako esku-hartzeak eztabaidatzean, artikuluak argudio nagusi hau defendatzen du: beharrezkoa dela continuumaren eta kodependentziaren errealitatea eta garrantzia ulertzea eta aitortzea, Galesen kasuan, dentsitate altuko, ertaineko eta baxuko eremuetan zehar. Ondorioz, proposatzen du continuuma eta kodependentzia kontuan hartu beharko liratekeela hiztun-dentsitate altuko eremuak sostengatzeko erronkei erantzuteko politikak garatu eta inplementatzeko erabiltzen diren marko kontzeptualetan.

Galesa

Galesa, Europako hizkuntza gutxituen alorrean, ingurune linguistiko ezagune-netako bat da ekintzaile, ikertzaile eta politika-arduradunen artean. Tamaina ertaineko hizkuntza gutxitua da, milioi-erdi hiztunetik gora dituen (Welsh Government, 2022); hizkuntza-mugimenduak eta kultur elkarteak sustatzen dituen gizarte zibil aktiboa, oinarri sozioekonomiko zabala eta eremu askotan garatu eta ezarri diren hizkuntza-politikak dituen ingurune publikoa ditu.

Orain dela hogeita hamar urte, Europar Batasuneko 48 gutxiengo linguistikoren produkzio eta erreprodukzio linguistikoaren azterketan, *Euromosaic* txostenak (Nelde et al., 1996) bigarren multzoan kokatu zuen galesa, Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoko euskara baino puntu bat beherago, eta Nafarroako euskara eta Ipar Euskal Herriko euskara baino multzo bat gorago. Geroztik, hizkuntza-plangintzako ikuspegi desberdinek eta faktore sozioekonomiko

desberdinek eragin dute galesaren eta euskararen gaur egungo egoeran, bai haien lurraldeetan, bai diasporako komunitateetan eta eremu digitaletan.

Galesa eta euskara

Bi herrien eta hizkuntzen antzekotasunak ezagunak dira honezkero: biek dute 20.000 km² inguruko lurraldea eta 3 bat milioi biztanleko populazioa; nola euskara hala galesa linguistikoki urrun daude gaztelaniatik/frantsesetik eta ingelesetik; haien hiztunak adin guztietakoak dira eta ingurune landatar nahiz urbanoetan bizi dira; eta hiztunen ehunekoak eta kopuruak ez dira oso desberdinak, nahiz eta euskarak, azken hiru hamarkadetan, abantaila nabarmena hartu dion galesari, eta badirudien antzera jarraituko duela aurrerantzean.

Bi talde linguistikoek, beren ideia, esperientzia, kanpaina, ikerketa, ekimen eta politikekin, ekarpen nabarmena egin diete «eremu urriko hizkuntzen», «aniztasun linguistikoaren» eta «gutxituta eta galzorian dauden hizkuntzen» iraunkortasunari buruzko Europako diskurtsoei. Nahiz eta Gales, Erresuma Batuaren parte denez, jada ez dagoen Europar Batasunean, Galesen Europako sareetako parte-hartzeak bere horretan dirau. Galeseko ekintzaileak, akademikoak eta politika publikoetako arduradunak ELEN² eta NPLD³ sareetako kideak dira: lehena, Hizkuntza Berdintasunerako Europako Sarea, gizarte zibileko alor honetako elkartek ordezkatzen dituen GKEa da, eta bigarrena, Hizkuntza Aniztasuna Sustatzeko Sarea, gobernu autonomo eta erregionaletako ordezkaritzan aritzen da nagusiki. Nahiz eta Erresuma Batuak ezin duen jada Erasmus+ programan parte hartu, biziberritze linguistikoaren alorrean badira Europar Batasuneko programa batzuk Erresuma Batuaren parte-hartzea onartzen dutenak, esaterako E-COST-Action Plurilingmedia⁴ eta EU Horizon programako Fosterlang⁵ proiektua, eta horietan sartuta dago Gales.

Galesen eta Euskal Herriaren arteko aldebiko harremana sare horiek baino lehenagokoa da, norbanako garrantzitsu batzuen⁶, Mercator sarearen eta garai bateko Hizkuntza Gutxituen Europako Bulegoaren bidez. Hamarkadetan zehar, bi talde linguistikoek kontaktu eta trukeak izan dituzte sarri, gehienetan sare horien bidez. 2022an, Etxepare Euskal Institutuak, nire unibertsitatearekin

2. ELEN <https://elen.ngo/>

3. NPLD <https://npld.eu/>

4. Plurilingmedia <https://plurilingmedia.eu/>

5. Fosterlang <https://fosterlang.al.uw.edu.pl/>

6. Aipamen berezia egin behar zaio Ned Thomasen eta Txillardegiren arteko harremanari; ikusi, adibidez: Thomas, N. (2010) Bydoedd Tal-y-bont: Y Lolfa.

lankidetzan, Soziolinguistikako Alan R. King Katedra⁷ jarri zuen martxan, bi herrietan alor honetan diharduten ikertzaileen, gizarte zibilaren eta politika-arduradunen arteko hartu-emanaren sendotu eta are gehiago garatzeko. 2026ko urtarrilean, Galesko Gobernuak eta Eusko Jaurlaritzak beren harremana berritu zuten, Elkar Ulertzeko Memorandum⁸ eguneratu bat sinatuta. Horren bidez, garraioan, energian, teknologian, elikaduran, hezkuntzan, estrategia fiskalean, gizarte-politikan, osasunean, kulturen eta hizkuntzan, besteak beste, elkarrekin lan egiteko konpromisoa hartu zuten.

Euskararen egoera soziolinguistikoa, eta azken 40 urteetan lortutako aurrerapena, gaur egun galesaren alde diharduten ekintzaile, ikertzaile eta politika-arduradunentzako kanpoko erreferentzia- edo alderaketa-puntu garrantzitsuenak dela esan liteke.

Galesaren egungo erronkak

(1) Hitzunen kopuruak eta ehunekoak

Azken bost hamarkadetako erroldetan eta soziolinguistika-inkestetan jasotako datuen arabera, euskal hitzunen kopuruek eta ehunekoek gora egin dute; ezin da, ordea, gauza bera esan galesari buruz. Erresuma Batuko erroldako datuen arabera, Galesen bizi diren eta galesez mintzatzeko gai diren 3 urtetik gorako biztanleen kopuruak behera egin zuen hamarkadaz hamarkada XX. mendean zehar 1991ra arte; urte hartan, igoera txiki bat antzeman zen, 1981-1991 tartean gales-hitzunen populazioak 503.500etik 508.100era egin baitzuen gora. 2001ean, igoera handixeagoa nabaritu zen, 582.400 hitzun zenbatu baitziren. Halere, azken bi erroldek beheranzko joera erakutsi dute, 20.400 hitzun gutxiago baitzeuden 2011n eta 23.700 hitzun gutxiago 2021ean. Gales-hitzunen kopurua, beraz, 538.300ekoa da gaur egun; zenbaki horrek inoiz erregistratutako ehunekorik txikiena adierazten du, baina ez kopururik txikiena, 1. taulan erakusten den bezala.

7. Alan R. King Katedra <https://www.etxepare.eus/eu/euskal-ikasketak-katedrak>

8. <https://media.service.gov.wales/news/wales-must-take-every-opportunity-to-work-with-other-nations-and-regions-following-agreements-with-catalonia-and-basque-country> [2026ko otsailaren 1ean kontsultatua]

1. taula. Hiru urte edo gehiago dituzten eta galesez mintzatzeko gai diren biztanleen kopuruak, 1921etik 2021era [Galesen].

Urtea	Kopurua	Biztanleen ehunekoa (%)
1921	922.100	37,1
1931	909.300	36,8
1941	1941ean, Bigarren Mundu Gerraren ondorioz, ez zen erroldarik egin.	
1951	714.700	28,9
1961	656.000	26,0
1971	542.400	20,8
1981	503.500	19,0
1991	508.100	18,7
2001	582.400 (r)	20,8
2011	562.000	19,0
2021	538.300	17,8

Iturria: Welsh Government / ONS, Census of Population 1921–2021; Welsh language in Wales, Census 2021.

Eskozian ez bezala, non errolda 2022ra atzeratu baitzen, Erresuma Batuko errolda 2021ean egin zen Galesen, COVID pandemiaren erdian, eta haurrak ez ziren eskolara ohi bezala joaten osasun publikoan ezarritako murrizketen ondorioz. 2011-2021 tartean, eskolatze-adinean zegoen biztanleriaren zati horrek bizi izan zuen, alde handiaz gainera, jaitsierarik handiena, bai kopuruetan, bai ehunekoetan: 3-15 urteko 22.200 hiztun gutxiago zenbatu ziren, eta 5-15 urtekoen artean 6 puntuko jaitsiera izan zen.

2. taula. Hiru urte edo gehiago dituzten eta galesez mintzatzeko gai diren biztanleen kopuruak eta ehunekoak, adin-taldeka, 2011-2021.

Adin-taldea	2011		2021	
	Kopurua	%	Kopurua	%
3-4	16.500	% 23,3	11.900	% 18,2
5-15	152.300	% 40,3	134.700	% 34,3
16-19	43.700	% 27,0	38.800	% 27,5
20-44	150.700	% 15,6	153.800	% 16,5
45-64	107.900	% 13,3	107.300	% 13,0
65-74	45.100	% 15,0	45.900	% 12,8
75+	45.800	% 17,5	45.800	% 15,1
Guztira (3+)	562.000	% 19,0	538.300	% 17,8

Iturria: Welsh Government / ONS, Census of Population 1921-2021; Welsh language in Wales, Census 2021.

Zenbaki horiek iradokitzen dute errolda pandemiaren garaian egin izanak, ikasleak eskolara joan gabe egon zirelako luzaroan, azaltzen duela neurri handi batean hiztun-kopuru orokorrean izandako jaitsiera. Hala ere, garrantzitsua da azpimarratzea haur eta gazteek pandemiaren garaian hezkuntza-sistemaren eta hari lotutako sozializazioaren bidez galesa eskuratzeko, erabiltzeko eta garatzeko aukerak galdu edo eten izanak epe ertaineko eta luzeko ondorioak izan ditzakeela. Pandemiaren ondorioen eta 2021eko gales-hiztunen kopuruen arteko korrelazio zuzena egon arren, argi ikusten da gales-hiztunen kopurua ez dela handitzen ari Galeseko gobernuak 2017an argitaratutako 2050erako milioi bat gales-hiztun lortzeko helburuaren proiektzio edo ibilbidearen arabera (Llywodraeth Cymru, 2017).

3. taula. Hiru urte edo gehiago dituzten eta galesez mintzatzeko gai diren biztanleen kopuru eta ehunekoen proiektzio-ibilbidea, 2050 arteko garai zehatzetan.

Urtea	Kopurua	Ehunekoa
2011	562,000	19
2017	580,000	19
2021	600,000	20
2026	630,000	20
2031	680,000	22
2036	750,000	24
2041	830,000	26
2046	920,000	29
2050	1,000,000	31

Iturria: Welsh Government / ONS, Census of Population 1921–2021; Welsh language in Wales, Census 2021.

«Cymraeg 2050 Strategy: A million Welsh speakers» estrategia (Welsh Government, 2017) 2017an onartu zuen Galeseko gobernuak, eta «miloi bat gales-hiztun» leloa Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg elkarteak gizarte zibiletik bultzatutako kanpainatik hartu zuen. Cymraeg 2050 estrategiak hiru ardatz estrategiko ditu: (a) gales-hiztunen kopurua handitzea, (b) galesaren erabilera handitzea, eta (c) baldintza lagungarriak sortzea: azpiegiturak eta testuingurua.

(2) Hizkuntza-jabekuntza hezkuntzaren bidez

Galesaren eta euskararen azken hamarkadetako historia soziolinguistikoa izandako desberdintasun esanguratsuenetako bat da administrazio bakoitzeko hezkuntza-sistemak zer erritmotan heldu dion euskarazko eta galesezko hezkuntzaren eskuragarritasuna handitzeko auziari. Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoaren kasuan, hezkuntza arautua euskaraz jasotzen zuten ikasleak (D eredua) % 15 baino gutxiago ziren 1980ko hamarkadaren erdian (Lloyd Williams et al., 2024), eta 2024rako⁹ % 70 baino gehiago ziren sistema bateratuan (eta % 94 sistema publikoan). Onartu behar den arren ez dela halako bilakaerarik izan Nafarroan eta Iparraldean, Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoan eskolatutako 360.000 haur eta gazteen gehiengo handi bat D ereduan matrikulatzeak nabarmen eragin du adin-talde gazteenetako hiztun-kopuruaren gorakadan. Galesaren kasuan, ez da halako aurrerapenik lortu orain arte. Gaur egun, eskolatzeko-adinean dauden biztanleen % 17 inguru galesezko eskoletan matrikulatzen dira, eta % 9 inguru

⁹ <https://orain.eus/es/actualidad/sociedad/2024/09/06/comienzo-curso-escolar-2024-2025-en-cav/>

eredu elebidunetan. Ingelesezkotako hezkuntza –galesa irakasgai gisa hartuta– eredu nagusia da oraindik alde handiz: 2023/24 ikasturtean ikasleen % 73 zeuden eredu horretan matrikulatuta, 2003/04 ikasturteko % 79rekin alderatuta.

4. taula. Ikasle-kopurua ikastetxeko irakaskuntza-hizkuntzaren arabera, 2003/04-2023/24

	Galesezko eredia	Elebiduna	Ingelesezkotako eredia	Baztertuak	Guztira
2003/04	91.300 (% 19)	8.930 (% 2)	389.340 (% 79)	4.591 (% 1)	494.161
2012/13	73.888 (% 16)	42.776 (% 9)	342.449 (% 74)	5.755 (% 1)	464.868
2022/23	77.922 (% 17)	42.160 (% 9)	343.700 (% 73)	6.090 (% 1)	469.872
2023/24	78.582 (% 17)	40.783 (% 9)	340.003 (% 73)	6.472 (% 1)	465.840

Iturria: StatsWales, Welsh Government, Maintained schools and pupils by local authority, Welsh medium type and year (2023/24ra arte). Kategoriak Lloyd Williams et al. (2024) lanari jarraituz bateratu dira.

Galesen, aldakortasun handia dago eskualde batetik bestera, eta eskolatze-adinean dauden eta nagusiki ingelesezko hezkuntza jasotzen duten biztanleen ehunekoak bat datoz galeseraz inolako gaitasunik ez duten adin guztietako biztanleen ehunekoekin, Erresuma Batuko erroldaren arabera. Merezki du gogoraraztea hezkuntza agintaritzaren mailako arazko betebeharra dela Galesen, eta gizarte zibileko hainbat elkarrekin galeserazko hezkuntzarako sarbide ekitatiboagoa eskatu dutela behin eta berriz, kanpaina nazional eta lokal bidez, gurasoen ekintza-taldeen bidez nahiz auzi estrategikoen bidez. Izan ere, galesaren biziberritzearen alde dihardutenen artean frustrazio handia eragiten du oraindik ere hainbeste traba daudela ikusteak, eta ohartzeak zein zaila den galeserazko hezkuntza ezartzea eta populazioaren gehiengoarentzako aukera errealean bihurtzea, denbora-tarte berean Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoan bihurtu den bezala.

Itxaropen handia dago berriki onartutako Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 legeak aldaketa hori azkenik Gales osoan eragingo duelakoan. Legeak 2050erako milioi bat galeserazko helburua lortzen lagunduko du, eta horretarako neurriak ezarriko ditu ikasle guztiak, derrigorrezko eskola-adina bukatzen dutenerako, gutxienez galesaren erabilera independenteak izan daitezkeen. Laburbilduz, Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 legeak galesaren estrategiari 2050erako gutxienez milioi bat galeserazko jomuga jasotzeko betebeharra ezarriko dio, baita galesaren erabileraekin lotutako beste jomuga batzuk ere, lantokiko eta gizartearen erabilera barne. Gainera, galesaren gaitasuna Hizkuntzetarako Europako Erreferentzia Esparru Bateratuaren mailan arabera deskribatzeko ikuspegi estandarra ezarriko du. Eskoletarako arazko

hiru hizkuntza-kategoria zehazten ditu («nagusiki galesa», «bi hizkuntzakoa» eta «nagusiki ingelesa, partez galesa»), eta hizkuntza-kategoria horiek izendatzeko arauak ezartzen ditu, bai eta kategoria bakoitzerako galesezko hezkuntzaren gutxieneko kopuruari eta galesa ikasteko helburuei buruzko eskakizunak ere. Maila nazionalen egindako hizkuntza-plangintza (Galeseko ministroei Galesezko Hezkuntzaren eta Galesaren Ikaskuntzaren Marko Nazionala prestatzeko betebeharra ezarri), agintaritza lokalen mailakoa (hezkuntzan galesa sustatzeko plan estrategiko lokalak prestatzeko betebeharra ezarri) eta eskola-mailakoa (galesezko hezkuntza emateko planak prestatzeko betebeharra ezarri) lotuko ditu. Galesa Ikasteko Institutu Nazionala ere eratuko du, adin guztietako jendeari galesa ikasten laguntzeaz arduratuko den erakunde berria.

(3) Galesaren erabilera soziala

Hizkuntza gutxituaren erabilera soziala handitzea Europa osoko komunitateek partekatzen duten helburua da. Kataluniaren kasuan, biztanleen % 90 inguruk hitz egin dezakete katalanez, % 79k lanean edo eskolan erabiltzen dute, % 78k gutxienez noizbehinka erabiltzen dute lagunekin eta % 68k maila batean edo bestean erabiltzen dute familian¹⁰. Baldintza horietan ere, ordea, ekintzaile, ikertzaile eta politika-arduradunen artean kontzientzia sendoa dago katalanaren erabilera soziala presio handiaren pean dagoela, neurri handi batean egiturazko baldintzen ondorioz: sare sozialen, ikus-entzunezkoen eta espazio digitalen eragina, populazioaren mugikortasuna, eta elkarrizketa eta hartu-emanak hizkuntza bakarrean egiteko edo hizkuntza bakarrera aldatzeko arau sozialak, gartzelania bihurtzen delarik hizkuntza bakar hori. Bartzelonako Udalak, berriki, Katalanaren Erabilera Sozialerako mandatariaren¹¹ kargua sortu du, eta hainbat ikerketak erakusten dute adin-talderik gazteena dela katalanez hitz egiteko gaitasun handiena duena, baina adin-talde horretako hiztunak ez direla katalanaren erabiltzaile beste adin-talde askotako hiztunak bezain intentsiboak (Departament de Política Lingüística & Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya, 2025; Vila i Moreno et al., 2023). Antzeko kezka-diskurtsoak aurki daitezke Europako hizkuntza gutxitu edo galzorian dauden hizkuntza-komunitate askotan hizkuntzaren erabilera sozialari dagokionez.

Alde horretatik, Gales ez da salbuespena. Esaterako, Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 legearen 1. zatiak «galesaren erabilera sustatzea eta erraztea» du izenburu, eta galesaren estrategiaren helburuei egiten die

10. <https://llengua.gencat.cat/ca/el-catala/coneixement-i-us/>

11. <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ca/organigrama-municipal/organ/Comissionat%20d%27%C3%9As%20Social%20del%20Catal%C3%A0>

erreferentzia: gutxienez milioi bat gales-hiztun lortzea eta erabilera handitzea. Legeak dio «galesaren erabilera sustatzeko eta errazteko estrategiak Galesen gales-hiztunen kopurua 2050erako gutxienez milioi batera handitzeko helburua jaso behar duela»; horrek esan nahi du lege hau onartzearen ondorioz helburu estrategikoa arauzko helburu bihurtu dela. Gainera, Legeak jasotzen du estrategiak «Galesen galesaren erabilera handitzeko helburuak ezarri behar» dituela, lantokiko eta gizarteko erabilera barne. Galesaren erabilera handitzea da Cymraeg 2050 estrategiaren bigarren helburu nagusia, eta testuinguru horretan eguneroko erabiltzaileen ehunekoa bikoiztea da xedea. Galeseko gobernuak hizkuntzaren erabilera handitzea Cymraeg 2050 estrategiaren testuinguruan¹² egiten duen «guztiaren erdigunean» jartzen du. Adierazten du «Gobernu osoan eta Gales osoko hainbat bazkiderekin lanean jarraituko» duela «gure hizkuntzaren erabilera handitzeko etxean, gizarte- eta komunitate-mailan, eskolako jolastokian, lantokietan, negozioetan eta digitalki». Galesaren erabilera sozialaren garrantzia ezin liteke modu sinesgarriago batean adierazi. Galesaren testuinguruan, hizkuntzaren erabilera sozialak familia barruko eta lantokiko erabilera barne hartzen ditu, baita aisialdiko, kulturako eta kiroleko, komunitate-bizitzako eta sareko erabilera ere.

Hala ere, hizkuntza gizarte-fenomenoa da, eta sozialki erabiltzeko aukerak hiztunek elkar topatzen duten leku eta espazioen arabera dira, non hartu-emanak trabarik gabe gerta daitezkeen. Erabilera sozialerako baldintzak egiturazko faktoreek zehazten dituzte, Isasik eta Txillardegik (1994) eta galesaren, euskararen eta galzorian dauden hizkuntzen testuinguru zabalagoetan beste askok argudiatu duten bezala. Fishmanen «breathing spaces» kontzeptua (Fishman, 1991, 59. or.), non hizkuntza (gutxitua) hizkuntza nagusiaren presiorik gabe erabil daitezkeen, asko garatu da euskal testuinguruan (liburu honetako beste kapitulu batzuetan azaldu den bezala) Mikel Zalbideren, Iñaki Iurrebasoren eta beste batzuen lanetan, BAT Soziolinguistika Aldizkarian (2019), kazetaritzan, UEMAk eta beste batzuek egindako kanpainetan eta politikagintzan, *Euskararen arnasguneak: Definizioaren eta erronken berrikuspena* (2024)¹³ dokumentuan. Euskal eztabaida ingelesez ikusteko, ikus Dorronsoro (2025, argitaratzear); eta galesez, Jones (2025)¹⁴. Nazioarteko literaturan, Belmarrek eta Glassek (2019) ekarpen garrantzitsua egin zioten Fishmanen «breathing spaces» kontzeptuaren garapenari, arnasgune digital edo birtualen eztabaidan sakonduz.

12. <https://www.gov.wales/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy-action-plan-2025-2026.html>

13. <https://arnasagara.eus/arnasguneak/> edo Nafarroako Gobernua, Eusko Jaurlaritza & UEMA. (2024ko martxoa). *Euskararen arnasguneak: Definizioaren eta erronken berrikuspena*. https://arnasagara.eus/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Euskararen-arnasguneak_2024ko-martxoa.pdf

14. <https://pedwargwynt.cymru/dadansoddi/fel-gall-ein-hiaith-ni-andalu-yma>

Euskal Herrian *breathing spaces* edo arnaguneen esanahiaren inguruan egin den eztabaidak ekarpen garrantzitsua egin dio haien garapenari eta beste komunitate linguistiko batzuetan egin daitekeen aplikazioari. Arnasguneek, geografia-komunitateak direnez (hau da, hiztun-dentsitate altuko eremuak), hizkuntzak trabarik gabe erabiltzeko espazio sozial ugari ere eskaintzen dituzte, eta horrek Fishmanen *breathing spaces* deiturikoen definizio zabalagoa islatzen du. Dentsitate altuko eremu geografikoen iraunkortasunaren garrantzia, galesaren testuinguruan, 1960ko hamarkadatik aurrerako kanpaina linguistikoen muina izan da, hizkuntza Gales osoan biziberritzeko kanpaineekin batera. Labur esanda, galesaren erabilera soziala sustatzeko diskurtsoan, beti azpimarratu izan dira bai geografia sozialak, bai espazio linguistikoak (espazio digitala barne).

Dentsitate linguistiko altuko eremuen iraunkortasuna

Cymraeg 2050 estrategiaren hirugarren gaiak, «Baldintza lagungarriak sortzea: azpiegiturak eta testuingurua», ekimen sorta zabala biltzen du, teknologiatik eta azpiegitura linguistiko digitaletatik kulturara eta hedabideetara. Arlo horretako lehen helburua «Komunitatea eta ekonomia: ekonomia garatzea galesez mintzatzen diren komunitateentzat oinarri sendoa bermatzeko» da, eta esplizituki aipatzen ditu «gales-hiztunen dentsitate altua duten komunitateak». 2025-2026ko Ekintza Plan berrienean (Welsh Government, 2025), gai hori Etxebizitza, Hizkuntza eta Enpleguarekin hasten da, eta adierazten du Galeseko gobernuak «konprometituta dagoela galesez mintzatzen diren komunitateen iraunkortasuna babesteko, etxebizitzaren, hizkuntza-plangintzaren, ekonomiaren eta garapen ekonomikoaren politikak lerrotatuz ezarri beharreko esku-hartze sorta bat eskaintzeko». Ekintza Plana argitaratu zenean, Galeseko gobernuak oraindik ez zuen argitaratu Galesez Mintzatzen diren Komunitateen Batzordearen lehen txostenari, *Empowering Communities, Strengthening the Welsh Language* (2024ko abuztua), emandako erantzuna.

Galesez Mintzatzen diren Komunitateen Batzordea

Galesez Mintzatzen diren Komunitateen Batzordea 2022ko abuztuan eratu zuen Galeseko gobernuak, *Second Homes: Developing new policies in Wales* (2021) txostena argitaratu ondoren. Batzordeari ardura hau eman zitzaion: «Gobernuari gomendioak ematea galesa etorkizunean komunitate-hizkuntza gisa babesteko... [eta] gure komunitateetan hizkuntzak duen osasunari buruzko analisi soziolinguistikoa gidatzea»; horrek aukera emango zion «galesez mintzatzen diren komunitateek dituzten erronkak kontuan hartzeko eta COVID-19aren ondorengo

berregituratze linguistiko, sozioekonomiko eta sozialeko erronkak eta Erresuma Batuak Europar Batasunetik irteteko hartutako erabakia hobeto ulertzeko».

2022an, Galeseko gobernuak *Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan* (Welsh Government, 2022) argitaratu zuen; plan horrek hainbat ekimen jaso zituen, «ekonomiaren, etxebizitzaren, komunitate-garapenaren eta hizkuntza-plangintzaren alorreko esku-hartzeak bateratzeko, galesez mintzatzen diren komunitateek bideragarri izaten jarrai dezaten ekonomikoki eta linguistikoki» (Welsh Government, 2022).

Garai berean, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, University of the Highlands and Islands eta Jesus College Oxford University erakundeen arteko lankidetzak bat garatu zen gales-hiztunen dentsitate altuko eremuak ikertzeko. Prosiect BRO: *gaur egungo galesez mintzatzen diren komunitateen inkesta soziolinguistiko orokorrak*¹⁵ Batzordearen lana ere babestu zuen erroldako datuen analisien bidez eta Batzordearen eztabaidetan aurkezpenak eta ekarpenak eginez, bere lehen txostena, *Empowering Communities, Strengthening the Welsh Language*, argitaratu aurretik.

Ekimen horiek argi erakusten dute Galeseko gobernuak garrantzi handia ematen diola gales-hiztunen dentsitate altuko eremuak iraunarazteari, bai eta galesaren aldeko bere estrategiari ere.

Komunitateak ahalduntzen, galesa indartzen

Bere lehenengo txostenean (*Empowering Communities, strengthening the Welsh Language* [Komunitateak ahalduntzen, galesa indartzen], Batzordeak gomendio sorta zabal bat argitaratu zuen. Zehazki, 57 politika-gomendio egin zituen galesez mintzatzen diren komunitateak babesteko eta indartzeko, zortzi politika-alorretan banatuta: ekonomia, lantokiak, komunitateen garapena, etxebizitza, herri- eta herrialde-mailako plangintza, berdintasuna-aniztasuna-inklusioa, galeszko hezkuntza eta komunitateko hizkuntza-plangintza. Txostenaren gomendio nagusia «dentsitate linguistiko altuko eremuak» izendatzea zen, eta eremu horietan arreta handiagoa eskaintzea galesari aipatutako zortzi politika-alor horietako politiketan. Galeseko gobernuaren barruan unitate espezialista bat sortzea ere gomendatzen zuen, dentsitate linguistiko altuko eremuetarako politikak koordinatzeko.

15. Prosiect BRO <https://www.wales.ac.uk/bro>

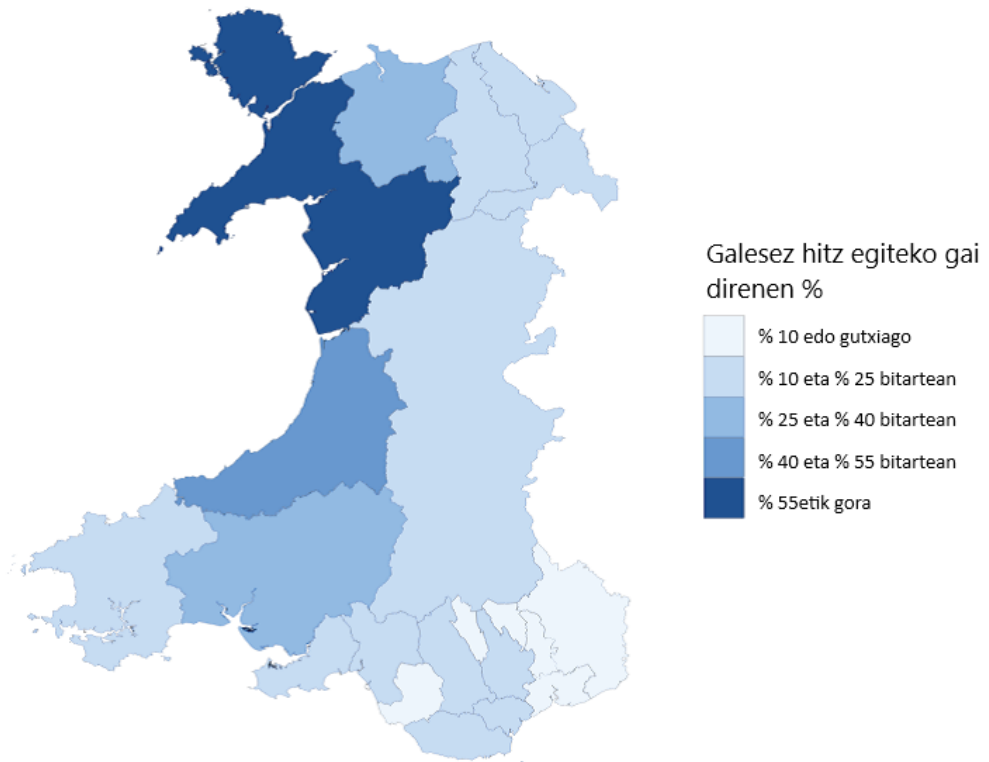
Continuum geolinguistikoa eta kodependentzia. Dentsitate linguistikoko altuko eremuak: galesaren egungo testuingurua

Galeseko kartografiak, oro har, galesez hitz egiteko gai den biztanleriaren ehuneko edo dentsitatea % 10eko eskalen bidez irudikatu izan du, % 0-10etik % 80tik gorako tartetara. Mapa horiek dentsitate altueneko eremuen zatikatzea nabarmentzen dute denboran zehar. % 70eko atalasea maiz aurkezten da mugarri gisa, edo testuinguru honetan komunitate geografikoan hizkuntzarentzako gizarte-mailako aldaketa-puntua erakusteko estatistikarik esanguratsuena bezala. Ehuneko hori, nagusiki, baldintza horietan pertsonen arteko komunikazioaren hizkuntza zein izango den kalkulatzeko probabilitatean oinarritzen da, soziolinguistikaren ikuspegi matematikoetan oro har egin izan den bezala (ikus, adibidez, Isasi et al., 1994).

Batzordearen gomendioa «dentsitate linguistikoko altuko eremuak» definitzen dituen atalasea % 40an ezartzea zen, Erresuma Batuko 2021eko erroldan, eta agintaritza lokalei malgutasuna ematea atalase hori baino pixka bat beherago kokatzen diren eremuak izendatzeko. Galeseko 22 agintaritza lokaletatik lauk baino ez dute % 40tik gorako hiztun-portzentajea (Gwynedd, Ynys Môn, Ceredigion eta Sir Gaerfyrddin, ikusi beheko taula/mapa). Hiztun-portzentajea batezbesteko nazionala baino altuagoa den beste bi agintaritza lokaletan (Conwy eta Sir Ddinbych konderrietan), beste 20 auzo¹⁶ daude non hiztun-portzentajea % 40tik gorakoa den, eta batezbesteko nazionaletik behera dauden hurrengo hiru agintaritza lokaletan (Sir Benfro, Powys eta Castell-nedd Port Talbot konderrietan), halako ehunekoak dituzten beste 17 auzo daude landaguneetan eta eremu postindustrialetan. Bederatzai agintaritza lokal horietatik kanpo, ez dago auzorik non gales-hiztunen portzentajea % 40koa edo handiagoa den.

16. Auzo horien izen teknika Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) da. 1.000-3.000 biztanle inguruko unitateak dira. Galesen, 1.917 LSOA daude guztira. Horietatik 232tan, 3 urte edo gehiago dituzten eta galesez mintzatzeko gai diren biztanleak % 40 edo gehiago dira.

1. mapa. Hiru urte edo gehiago dituzten gales-hiztunak agintaritza lokalen arabera, Gales, 2021eko errolda.



Iturria: Welsh Government / ONS, Census 2021.

5. taula. Galeseko 3 urte edo gehiago dituzten gales-hiztunen kopuru eta ehunekoak 22 agintaritza lokalen eta batezbesteko nazionalaren arabera.

	2021	
	Kopurua	Ehunekoa
Gwynedd	73.600	64,4
Ynys Môn	37.400	55,8
Ceredigion	31.700	45,3
Sir Gaerfyrddin	72.800	39,9
Conwy	29.000	25,9
Sir Ddinbych	20.900	22,5
Cymru (Gales)	538.300	17,8
Sir Benfro	20.600	17,2
Powys	21.400	16,4
Castell-nedd Port Talbot	18.700	13,5
Rhondda Cynon Taf	28.600	12,4
Wreccsam	16.000	12,2
Caerdydd	42.800	12,2
Sir y Fflint	17.400	11,6
Bro Morgannwg	14.700	11,5
Abertawe	26.000	11,2
Caerffili	17.800	10,5
Pen-y-bont at Ogwr	13.000	9,2
Merthyr Tudful	5.100	8,9
Sir Fynwy	7.900	8,7
Torfaen	7.400	8,2
Casnewydd	11.600	7,5
Blaenau Gwent	4.000	6,2

Iturria: Welsh Government / ONS, Census 2021.

Laburbilduz, 243.416 biztanle, edo gales-hiztunen % 45, gales-hiztunen batez besteko ehunekoa % 40koa edo handiagoa den konderrietan bizi dira, edota hiztun-portzentajea % 40koa edo altuagoa den auzoetan. Horrek zera esan nahi du: gales-dentsitate altuaren atalasea % 40an ezarriko balitz, Batzordearen gomendioek —politika publikoetan inplementatuz gero— Gales osoko gales-hiztunen ia erdien bizitzetan eragingo luketela.

Behean ageri den 6. taulan, Galeseko datuak Euskararen Inkesta Soziolinguistikoa erabilitako lau eremuen arabera sailkatu dira. Erresuma Batuko 2021eko erroldako¹⁷ datuek erakusten dutenez, gales-hiztunen % 2 bizi dira biztanleen % 80 edo gehiago galesez mintza daitezkeen auzoetan. Guztira 15.000 biztanle baino gutxiago dituzten komunitate barreiatuetarako hizkuntzaren biziberritze-politikak eratzea ez da egingarria galesaren testuinguruan, baina, era berean, ez da jendearen bizimoduaren isla ere. Dentsitate altuko eremuak izendatzeko ehunekoak altuegi ezartzeak eta Galeseko testuinguruan politika publikoak aldatzeak okerreko irudia emango luke: «gune linguistiko isolatu» gisa deskribatuko lituzke berez continuum linguistiko geografiko baten barruan dauden eta testuinguru sozialean, kulturalen eta ekonomikoan kodependentzia bat partekatzen duten auzoak.

6. taula. Galeseko datuak euskararen 1-4 hizkuntza-eremuen arabera.

Hizkuntza gutxituko hiztunen ehunekoaren araberako eremuak (2021)	Euskara (Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoa soilik)		Cymraeg	
	Hiztun- kopurua	Hiztun guztien %	Hiztun- kopurua	Hiztun guztien %
1. eremua: % 20tik behera	219.385	% 32	246.716	% 46
2. eremua: % 20-% 50	157.209	% 23	146.669	% 27
3. eremua: % 50-% 80	219.008	% 32	131.515	% 24
4. eremua: % 80tik gora	85.027	% 12	13.412	% 2
GUZTIRA	680.629	% 100	538.312	% 100

Iturria: Eusko Jaurlaritza eta Galeseko Gobernua, 2021eko errolda.

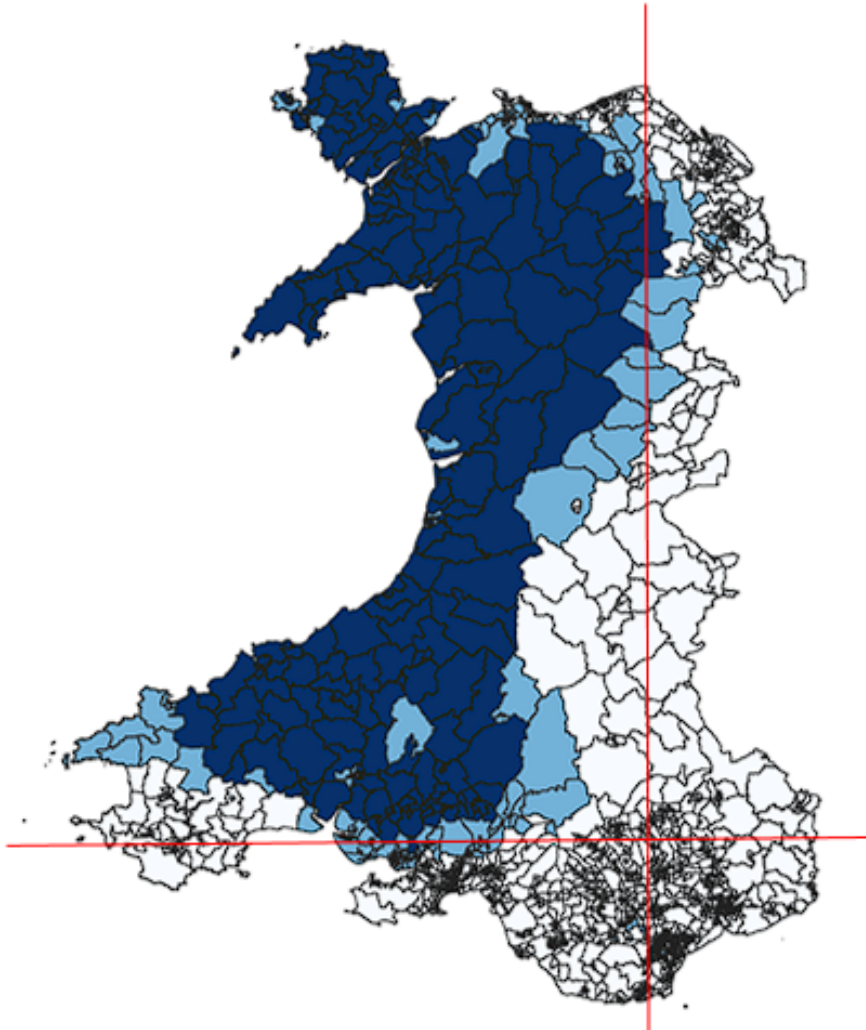
Dentsitate altuko eremuak % 40ko atalasearekin mapan irudikatzeak aukera ematen du komunitateetako pertsonen nola bizi, lan egin, ikasi eta beren bizitza nola antolatzen duten hobeto kontuan hartzeko, bereziki landa-eremuetan eta erdi landatarretan. Adibidez, 2021eko Erresuma Batuko erroldaren arabera, pandemia-

17. 2021eko errolda 2021eko martxoaren 2lean egin zen, pandemiaren eta aldaketa azkarren garaian. Orientabide osagarriak eman ziren aldi baterako lan-erregulazioan zeuden pertsonen lanari buruzko errolda-galderei erantzuteko. Hala ere, ezin da jakin pertsona horiek nola bete zituzten jarraibideak. Kalitateari buruzko kontu zehatz gehiago hemen: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/methodologies/traveltoworkqualityinformationforcensus2021>.

garaian egin zena, gales-hiztunen ehuneko handiena duten lau konderrietako biztanleria landunaren % 12 eta % 14 artean etxetik 2 km baino gutxiagora egiten zuten lan. Etxetik 2 km eta 60 km artean lan egiten zutenen ehunekoa % 35 zen Ceredigionen, % 42 Gwynedden, % 46 Ynys Môn eta % 47 Sir Gaerfyrddinen (Carmarthenshire). Nagusiki etxetik lan egiten zutenei dagokienez —eta kontuan hartuta datuak aldatu ahal izan direla COVID murrizketak kendu ondoren—, ehunekoak % 23 ingurukoak ziren Ynys Môn, Gwynedden eta Sir Gaerfyrddinen, eta % 32koak Ceredigionen.

Lanera, ikastera eta beste zerbitzu batzuk jasotzera edo aisia-jarduerak egitera joateko bidaiek ere islatzen dituzte dentsitate altuko, ertaineko eta baxuko eremuen arteko continuum eta kodependentzia. Adibide bat ospitale orokor bat litzateke, gales-hiztunen ehunekoa inguruko eremuetan baino baxuagoa duen auzo batean kokatua. Osasun-zerbitzuak eskaintzen dituen zentro gisa, eskualde eta biztanleria zabal bat artatzen du, non dentsitate altuko, ertaineko eta baxuko auzoak dauden. Eskualde zabal horretan bizi den biztanleriarentzako lantoki bat ere bada. Galesez mintzatzen diren langileetako batzuk dentsitate altuko auzoetan biziko dira. Beste langile batzuk, haiek ere gales-hiztunak, dentsitate ertaineko edo baxuko eremuetan biziko dira. Ospitalea haien guztien lantoki komuna da, non pazienteak eta haien familiak galesez ere artatzen dituzten. Ospitalerik ez balego, ez legoke lantokirik dentsitate altuko auzoetan bizi diren hiztunentzat edo dentsitate ertaineko edo baxuko eremuetan bizi direnentzat. Horrek eremu desberdinen arteko continuum geolinguistikoaren kodependentzia eta garrantzia irudikatzen ditu.

2. mapa. Dentsitate linguistiko altuko (% 40) eta ertaineko (% 20) eremuak, Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) unitateen arabera, 2021eko errolda.



GAKOA: Kolore ilunez ageri diren eremuak gales-hiztunak % 40 edo gehiago diren auzoak irudikatzen dituzte. Gris argiagoz ageri direnek, berriz, gales-hiztunak % 20 eta % 40 artean diren auzoak adierazten dituzte.

Marra zuzen bertikal eta horizontalek Galeseko biztanleriaren banaketa bertikal eta horizontal mediana adierazten dute; biztanleriaren % 50 marra bakoitzaren alde banatan bizi da.

Dentsitate linguistiko altuko eremuak herrialdeko eremu gutxien populatuetan kokatuta daude.

Iturria: Prosiect BRO, 2021eko Erresuma Batuko erroldako LSOA datuetan oinarrituta.

Continuuma eta «dentsitate ertaineko eremuak»

Azpiarratu behar da Batzordearen lehen txostenean ez zela gomendiorik egin «dentsitate ertaineko» izendapen ofizialik emateko. Hala ere, Batzordeak % 25eko atalase bat proposatu zuen dentsitate ertaineko eremuak deskribapen-eta analisi-xedeetarako adierazteko. Prosiect BROren analisi gehiago egin ondoren, Batzordearen eztabaidak % 20ko portzentajea dentsitate ertaineko eremuak analisi gehiagorako identifikatzeko neurri koherenteena dela jotzera egin du. 2. mapan ikus daitekeenez, % 20ko mugan tarte argia dago hiztunen ehunekoa batezbesteko nazionalaren gainetik duten agintaritza lokalen eta hiztunen ehunekoa horren azpitik dutenen artean. Dentsitate ertainaren maila % 20an kokatzeak aukera ematen du «dentsitate ertaineko» auzo gehiago kontuan hartzeko eta aztertzeko, bereziki hiztunen ehunekoa batezbesteko nazionalaren azpitik duten agintaritza lokalen barruan. Testuinguru horietan, adibidez, biztanleen % 24 galesez hitz egiteko gai diren auzoak beren agintaritza lokalaren batezbestekoa baino ia 12 ehuneko-puntu gorago egon litezke. Galesez hitz egiteko gaitasuna 10etik 2 pertsonak duten auzoetan eguneroko esperientzietan galesak duen presentzia, 10etik 1 pertsonak baino ez duten auzoekin alderatuta, esanguratsua izan daiteke eta gehiago aztertu beharko litzateke.

Galesez Mintzatzen diren Komunitateen Batzordea, bere bigarren fasean, galesak dentsitate ertain eta baxuko eremuetan komunitate-hizkuntza gisa duen erabilera aztertzen ari da. Txostena 2026an argitaratuko da. Testuinguru honetan, «dentsitate ertaineko» eremuak (% 20tik gora baina % 40tik behera) hiru kategoriatan analiza daitezke: (a) azken bost hamarkadetan hizkuntzaren gainbehera bizi izan duten landa- edo erdi landa-eremuak, merkatu-hiriak barne; (b) denbora-tarte berean hizkuntzaren gainbehera bizi izan duten eremu postindustrialak; (c) 1960ko hamarkadatik aurrera hiztun-kopuruan eta -ehunekoan nolabaiteko hazkundera izan duten hiri-eremuak. Azken kategoria horretan sartzen dira Caerdydd (Cardiff) eta Rhondda Cynon Taf hegoaldean, eta Sir y Fflint (Flintshire) iparraldean. Ikerketa gehiago egiten ari dira eremu horietako galesaren profila sakonago ulertzeko. Hasierako behaketek erakusten dute hainbat arrazoi daudela eremu horiek beren agintaritza lokaleko batezbestekoa baino gorago egoteko: besteak beste, 1960ko hamarkadatik aurrera Galeseko beste leku batzuetatik iritsitako gales-hiztunen migrazioaren ondorioak, hazkunde ekonomikoko eskualdeetako enplegu-aukerei eta sektore jakin batzuetan galesezko gaitasunen eskari handiagoari lotuta; galesezko hezkuntzaren bidezko hizkuntza-jabekuntza indartua; gales-hiztunen migrazio-belaunaldi berriak; eta bigarren eta hirugarren belaunaldiak, egonkortasun edo hazkunde

ekonomikoa duten eremu horietan bizitzen jarraitzen dutenak. Garrantzitsua da auzo horien gaur egungo eta etorkizuneko rolak kontuan hartzea hizkuntza-continuumaren eta kodependentziaren kontzeptuak gehiago aztertzen diren heinean.

Ondorioak

Galesaren testuinguruan, oraindik asko dago lortzeko maila nazionalean politika publikoei dagokienez, eta bereziki hezkuntzaren alorrean. XXI. mendearen bigarren laurdenean sartzen ari garen honetan, galesezko hezkuntza jasotzea oso zaila da oraindik Galeseko leku askotan: galesez ikasi nahi duten ikasleek denbora luzez bidaiatu behar dute, eta horrek konpromiso handia eskatzen die familiei ere. Gaur egun, Galeseko hiriburuan, guraso taldeak eta ekintzaileen mugimenduak borrokan ari dira beren auzoan galesez irakasten duen bigarren hezkuntzako ikastetxe bat izan dezaten. Gales Hizkuntzari eta Hezkuntzari buruzko Act 2025 Legea egoera hori zuzentzeko asmoz onartu zen, baina herritarren borroka oinarritzko tresna da oraindik Galesen hizkuntza biziberritzeko. Galesa hizkuntza nazionala den heinean, alegia Galeseko leku guztietako hizkuntza, agerikoa da gehiago egin behar dela hezkuntzaren alorrean, adibidez, ikuspegi hau eguneroko errealitate bihurtu dadin.

Galesaren testuinguruan, galesa Galeseko guztiena dela dioen diskurtsoa, bakoitza non bizi den alde batera utzita, funtsezkoa da dentsitate altuko eremuetarako politikak egitearen beharra ulertzeko. Galeseko gobernuak, Galesez Mintzatzen diren Komunitateen Batzordearen lehen txostenari emandako erantzunean (Welsh Government, 2025), Galeseko leku guztietan galesa indartzeko konpromisoa berretsi zuen. Lehen txostenaren gomendio nagusia —dentsitate linguistikoko altuko eremuak izendatzea— onartu egin zuen Galeseko gobernuak, Galeseko leku guztietan galesa indartzeko marko narratiboaren barruan. Xede horretarako, Galesez Mintzatzen diren Komunitateen Batzordeak 2026an argitaratuko du dentsitate ertain eta baxuko eremuei buruzko txostena. Galeseko gobernuak dentsitate altuko eremuetarako politikak egiteko printzipioa onartzeko duen konpromisoa argia da:

Galeseko gobernuak, beraz, onartzen du «dentsitate linguistikoko altuko» eremuak izendatzea [2. gomendia] garrantzitsua dela galesez mintzatzen diren komunitateak hizkuntza-galera handiagoetatik babesteko.

2026ko maiatzeko hauteskundeak direla eta, Galeseko hurrengo gobernuaren ardura izango da gomendioak ezarriko dituen ala ez, eta noiz ezarriko dituen, erabakitzea.

Hala ere, galesak komunitate-hizkuntza gisa dituen dentsitate altuko, ertaineko eta baxuko eremuen arteko continuumaren eta kodependentziaren kontzeptuek testuinguru honetako politika publikoen garapena eta inplementazioa gidatu beharko dituzte.

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6. Hiztun-dentsitate desberdineko lurralde- eremuen elkarreragina euskararen ahultze- eta indarberritze-prozesuetan

Asier Basurto Arruti (Soziolinguistika Klusterra)

Iñaki Iurrebaso Biteri (UEMA)

Laburpena: Artikulu honek Hego Euskal Herriko hiztunen bizileku-mugikortasunak hizkuntzen erabileran dituen ondorio soziolinguistikoak aztertzen ditu. Horretarako, ECEPOV (INE, 2021) inkestan oinarritutako adierazle berriak sortu dira, hiztunen bizilekua, jaioterria eta gurasoen jatorria zona soziolinguistiko ezberdinen arabera erabilerari buruzkoekin gurutzatuz. Emaitzek erakusten dute arnasguneetako gaztelaniaren erabileran pisu handia dutela zona erdaldunagoetatik etorritako hiztunek, eta, alderantziz, erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuetan euskara erabiltzen dutenen artean jatorria zona euskaldunagoetan duten hiztunek pisu esanguratsua dutela. Ondorioz, hiztun-komunitateak bere burua erreproduzitzeko gaitasunak baldintza espazial eta demografikoekin lotura zuzena duela baieztatzen da, eta lurralde arteko fluxuak hizkuntza-komunitatearen dinamika orokorraren elementu garrantzitsua direla.

Gako-hitzak euskara, arnasguneak, bizileku-mugikortasuna, nagusitasun-eremuak, dentsitate soziolinguistikoa, lurralde-dinamika soziolinguistikoak.

Kokapena

Artikulu honetan, Hego Euskal Herriaren testuinguruan hiztunen bizileku-mugikortasunak hizkuntzaren ohiko erabileran duen eragina aztertu da: zona erdaldunagoetan jatorria duten arnasguneetako biztanleena, batetik; eta zona euskaldunagoetan jatorria duten eta gaur egun zona erdaldunagoetan bizi diren herritarrena, bestetik.

Herritarren eta euren gurasoen jaiotza-tokia, gaur egungo bizilekua, familian egiten duten hizkuntza-erabilera eta lagunartean egiten dutena elkarrekin gurutzatuta eta gurutzaketen emaitzak aztertuta, zona soziolinguistikoen arteko bizileku-mugikortasunaren ondorio soziolinguistikoen zenbait ebidentzia eskuratu dira.

Ariketa honek heldulekua izan nahi du errealitate eta bilakaera soziolinguistikoa azterketan lurralde-ikuspegiak eta azterketa espazialek duten potentzialitatea nabarmentzeko. Eta zona soziolinguistiko bakoitzeko dinamikek hiztun-komunitate osoaren bilakaeran duten eragina agerian jartzeko.

Marko teorikoa

Arnasguneen ezaugarri soziolinguistikoak

«Arnasgune» kontzeptua Joshua A. Fishman soziolinguistaren «physical breathing space» aipamenetik dator, Mikel Zalbide euskaltzainak euskarara ekarri eta garatu zuena.

A demographically concentrated space where Xish can be on its own turf, predominant and unharassed. Such spaces may appear abnormal or atypical vis-à-vis the outside, non-Xish surrounding reality; but vis-à-vis internal Xish reality, such spaces become potential oases of authenticity and centres of increased cultural self-regulation that seek to counteract the physical dislocation that minority life is so commonly afflicted with (Fishman, 1991, 58. or.).

Kontzeptuak hainbat interpretazio eta erabilera izan ditu nazioarteko literatura soziolinguistikoan (Dorronsoro, 2025). Jatorrizko kontzeptuaren garapenik eta erabilerarik leialena euskal soziolinguistikaren testuinguruan egin da:

(...) the original meaning of the concept ‘breathing spaces’ had a fruitful development in the Basque context, where it has been literally translated as arnasgunea, and has continued being particularly loyal to Fishman’s definition. Most if not all the literature on the arnasguneak has been written in Basque, so both the knowledge about and access to such niche literature is usually limited to Basque-speaking researchers (Dorronsoro, 2025 6. or.).

Euskal soziolinguistika akademikoan nagusi den ulerkeraren arabera (Dorronsoro, 2025), arnasguneak «eguneroko mintzajardunean euskara nagusi duten eremu geoterritorialak» dira, non euskara «etxeko nagusi» sentitzen den eta «aparteko esfortzu, ordain-sari, autozentsura edo sakrifiziorik gabe» erabiltzen den (Zalbide, 2001). Praktikan, gehienetan, udalerririk erabiltzen dira arnasguneen operatibizatze- eta neurri-unitate gisa.

Arnasguneak dira hizkuntzaren belaunez belauneko transmisioa modu etengabea eta natural batean ziurtatzen den eremu bakarrak. Joshua A. Fishmanek bere RLS (Reversing Language Shift) eskalan «6. Etapa» gisa

identifikatzen du hau: «The intergenerational and demographically concentrated home-family-neighbourhood-community: the basis of mother-tongue transmission».

Mikel Zalbidek sei gako nagusi aipatzen ditu arnaguneen garrantzia azpimarratzeko (Zalbide, 2019):

1. Eguneroko euskarazko mintzamolde «normala», osasun oneko hiztun-elkarteen mintzajardun arruntaren antzekoena, arnaguneetan dago indar betean.
2. Arnaguneetan bizi den jendeak aparteko esfortzu, ordain-sari, autozentsura edo sakrifizioak gabe egiten du euskaraz, hitzez ari delarik, Inon idatzi gabeko gizarte-arauari jarraituz.
3. Euskal hiztun-elkarte beregaina bizirik dagoela erakusten dute arnaguneek, euskaraz «normal» bizitzea zer den argien azalduz.
4. Euskarazko mintzamen-maila altua eta hizkera aberatsa duten hiztunen sorgune oparoa dira; hitz-etorri oneko euskaldun trebe landuen harrobia.
5. Eguneroko mintzajardun arruntean euskara nagusi den esparru bakarra dira, herri- edo eskualde-mailan.
6. Haur, gazte eta helduen katean, belaunez belauneko transmisioa segurtaturik dago.

Bestalde, Zalbiderentzat arnaguneek elkarri lotuta dauden hiru erronka nagusi dituzte:

- Demolinguistikoa: hiztun-kopurua eta kontzentrazioa mantentzea (jaiotza-tasak, migrazioak, gazteak herrian atxikitzea...).
- Sozioekonomikoa: lanpostuak eta zerbitzuak herrian bermatzea.
- Soziokulturala: komunitate-sentimendua eta antolaketa soziala orekan uztarturik mantentzea eta euskarazko bizi-giroari eustea.

Arnaguneak Hego Euskal Herrian

Euskara minorizazio gorrian dago demolinguistikoki Euskal Herrian (Iurrebaso, 2023). Biztanleen % 83 hobeto moldatzen dira gaztelaniaz edo frantsesez euskaraz baino (2,2 milioi lagun), eta euskaraz hobeto moldatzen direnak, aldiz, % 8 dira (210.000 lagun). Kaleko euskararen erabilera % 12,6koa da, azken 24 urtetako maila berean (Altuna eta beste, 2022).

Hego Euskal Herriko arnasguneek¹ ahultze-zantzuak erakutsi dituzte azken urteetan. Datu kuantitatiboei dagokienez, 2021ean Hego Euskal Herrian, 21 udalerri baino ez ziren «arnasgune beteak» (% 80tik gorako euskararen erabilera dutenak), eta biztanleriaren % 0,3 baino ez zuten hartzen (9.424 biztanle). Horietaz gain, 75 udalerri «arnasgune erasanak» (% 60-80 arteko erabilera) ziren, biztanleriaren % 4,2 hartzen zutenak (118.093 biztanle). Horrek esan nahi du Hego Euskal Herriko biztanleriaren % 5 baino gutxiago bizi dela arnasguneetan. Aitzitik, hamar herritarretik bederatzi (% 88,5) gaztelania nagusi den udalerrietan bizi dira, batez ere euskararen erabilera % 20ra ere iristen ez den eremuetan.

**1. taula. Udalerriak eta biztanleria, nagusitasun-eremuetan.
Hego Euskal Herria, 2021 (Irizpidea: hurbileko erabileraren adierazle sintetikoa).**

Eremua	Udalerriak		Biztanleak	
	Kopurua	%	Kopurua	%
Arnasgune beteak (euskaraz % 80-100)	21	4,0	9.424	0,3
Arnasgune erasanak (% 60-80)	75	14,3	118.093	4,2
Nagusitasun argirik gabeak (% 40-60)	52	9,9	196.214	7,0
Erdararen nagusitasun ez-erabatekoak (% 20-40)	61	11,7	316.829	11,3
Erdararen nagusitasun handikoak (% 0-20)	314	60,0	2.174.018	77,2
GUZTIRA	523	100,0	2.814.578	100,0

Iturria: UEMA, 2025 [jatorrizko iturriak: Biztanleriaren eta etxebizitzaren zentsuak (Eustat-Nastat) eta Hizkuntzen Erabileraren Kale Neurketa (Soziolinguistika Klusterra)].

Arnasguneek biztanleriaren pisu demografiko mugatua dute, baina Euskal Herri osoan gertatzen den euskararen erabileraren zati handi bat haietan ekoizten da, euskal hiztunen dentsitatea, konzentrazioa eta hiztun-komunitatearen trinkotasunaren eraginez (Iurrebaso, 2023). Arnasguneetan haur gehienek euskara dute lehen hizkuntza, eta jatorrizko euskaldun gehienek euskarazko nagusitasunari eusten diote; esan daiteke, arnasguneetako baldintzek euskara erabiltzeko eta euskarazko gaitasuna handitzeko prozesuak errazten dituztela; lurraldearen gainontzeko eremuetan ez bezala.

1. Azterketa hau Hego Euskal Herrira mugatu behar izan da, Ipar Euskal Herrian ez baitago euskararen egoera maila lokalean aztertzea ahalbidetzen duen datu-ituririk.

Nagusitasun-eremuak ekosistema soziolinguistikoetako baldintzen adierazle gisa

Nagusitasun-eremuak lurraldea sailkatzeko modu bat dira, hizkuntzen erabilera-maila kontuan hartuta (ikusi 1. taulan Hego Euskal Herriko osaketa nagusitasun-eremutan). Baina erabileratik harago, praktikan *ekosistema* osoa hartzen dute kontuan. Eta euskararen diagnosia egiteko oinarritzko ardatzetako bat dira, berebiziko interesa baitu lurralde-mailan nagusitasun-eremu bakoitza azaleraz eta pisu demografikoz hazten edo txikitzen ari den ikustekak.

Euskarazko *nagusitasun-eremuak* kontzeptua lurralde-mailako kontzentrazioari eta euskara-erdaren nagusitasun soziolinguistikoari lotuta dago beraz. Nagusitasun-eremua kontzeptua, hizkuntza gutxitu baten azterketa demolinguitikoa erabil daiteke, hizkuntza-talde batek bere burua nola ekoizten eta ugaltzen duen aztertzeko. Nagusitasun-eremuak hiztunen gaitasun-zoruaren eta erabileraren aukeren egituraren adierazle dira. Ereku horiek baldintzatzen dute, norbanakoari dagokionez, erosotasun sozial eta gaitasun linguistiko pertsonal eta kolektiboaren arabera, hizkuntza bat ala bestea erabiltzeko aukera. Errazagoa den hizkuntza erabili beharrean, beste motibazio batzuek bultzatuta (atxikimendua eta transmisio-bulkada, kasu) hizkuntza gutxitua gehiago erabiltzeko ahaleginak zenbatekoa izan beharko duen ere testuinguruko baldintzen arabera da. Nagusitasun-eremuek, beraz, lurralde-testuinguruaren ezaugarriak jasotzen dituzte, eta horrek eragin zuzena du hiztunen hizkuntza-portaera indibidualean.

Izan ere, nagusitasun-eremuen barnean gertatzen diren dinamikek eragin handia dute hiztunen bilakaeran. Arnasguneetan bizi diren jatorritzko euskaldunek beste inon baino hobeto eusten diote euskarazko gaitasun erlatiboari. Orobat, ingurune horiek baldintza egokienak eskaintzen dituzte ez dakienak euskara ikasteko, gaitasun sendoa garatzeko, euskaraz hitz egiteko eta hizkuntza ondorengoei transmititzeko. Beste muturrean, erdararen nagusitasun handiko testuinguruetan zaila izango da euskaraz ez dakienarentzat euskara ikastea eta euskalduna euskaraz bizi ahal izatea: testuinguruak ez du lagunduko.

Haurtzaroaren eta nerabezaroaren garrantzia hizkuntza-sozializazioan eta hiztun-profila finkatzean

Hizkuntza-sozializazioa funtsezkoa da hizkuntza gutxituen jarraipenerako. Hizkuntza belaunaldi berriei transmititzea da hizkuntza gutxituak indarberritzeko eta iraunarazteko premia eta lehentasunezko prozesua. Haurren lehen biziurteek, haurtzaroak eta nerabezaroak, berebiziko garrantzia dute hizkuntza-sozializazioan eta hiztun-profila finkatzean (gaitasunean, erabileran eta

jarreretan). Ikuspegi horrekin, euskararen biziberritze-estrategia orokorrean zentrala izan den belaunaldi berriak euskaldun hazteko apustuak emaitza argiak izan ditu (Iurrebaso, 2023).

Testuinguru soziolinguistikoa funtsezko baldintzapena da haurrak hizkuntzaz jabetzeko eta hiztun bilakatzeko prozesuan (Kasares, 2013). Izan ere, komeni da begirada zabaltzea eta hizkuntza-sozializazioan familiaz gain eragina duten faktoreei erreparatzea: hizkuntza-transmisioan familiaz kanpoko baldintzek sendiaren barnekoek baino eragin handiagoa izaten dute maiz, gaur egun. Inguru hurbileko gizarte-sareak (lagunartea, herri-/auzo-giroa) eragile garrantzitsua dira Kasaresen arabera, horietan gertatzen baitira harreman informal gehienak. Etxetik kanpoko eremu horietan, adinkideen arteko harremanak erabakigarriak dira haurren hizkuntza-jokabideari begira. Etxeko, eskolako eta adinkideen arteko elkarrekintzak elkar elikatzen duten jarduera sozializatzaileak dira, haurtzaroko hizkuntza-sozializazio komunitarioaren prozesu zabalaren parte. Horiek horrela, hiztuna jaio eta hazi izan den testuingurua baldintzatzaile garrantzitsua izan ohi da eta aztarna utzi ohi du hiztunaren gaitasunean, erabilera-ohituretan eta hizkuntzekiko jarreretan.

Bizileku-mugikortasuna gizarte-egitura aztertzeako gako gisa

Bizileku-mugikortasuna (*Residential mobility*) kontzeptuari, honako definizioa eman zaio literatura akademikoan:

Residential mobility denotes the relatively local-scale relocation of individuals and households from one usual residence to another.

Bizileku-mugikortasunak norbanakoen eta etxekoen tokiko eskalako birkokapena adierazten du, ohiko bizileku batetik besterakoari.

(Coulter & Thomas, 2020)

Bestela esanda, *bizileku-mugikortasuna* pertsonak ohiko bizilekuz aldatzea da, neurri handi batean tokian tokiko birkokapenari erreferentzia eginez. Definizio horrek azpimarratzen du lekualdatzeak eskala lokal edo hurbilekoak izaten direla (ingurune hurbilean etxebizitza aldatuz), horrela bereiztuz *residential mobility* migrazio urrunagoetatik edo nazioarteko migrazioetatik.

Bizileku-mugikortasuna kontzeptua ulertzeko hainbat teoria eta eredu daude. Adibidez, populazio-mugikortasunaren lehen eredu klasikoek (*push-pull* migrazio-ereduak, Ravenstein-en legeak, etab.) bizileku-aldaketak bizitza-

baldintzen hobekuntzarekin edo beharrekin lotu zituzten; *Why Families Move* (Rossi, 1955) klasikotik hasita, ikuspegi honek azpimarratzen du familiek euren beharrianak aldatzean (seme-alabak, lan-aukerak, etxebizitza-baldintzak) bizilekua aldatzen dutela. Teoria horien arabera, bizileku-aldaketa pertsonen bizizikloan gertatzen diren gertaera eta trantsizioei erantzuteko mekanismo bat da (ezkontza, dibortzioa, seme-alaben jaiotza, erretiroa, etab.), eta hortaz *bizileku-mugikortasuna* bizitza-zikloaren eta bizitza-ibilbidearen ikuspegietatik ere aztertzen da (Coulter & Thomas, 2020). Azken ikerketa teorikoek, bestalde, *bizileku-mugikortasuna* erlaziozko praktika moduan birpentsatzera jo dute, denboran eta espazioan bizitzak lotzen dituzten eta, aldi berean, pertsonak egitura-baldintzetara konektatzen dituzten erlazio-praktika gisa (Coulter, Ham & Findlay, 2015). Ikuspegi horiek geografiaren eta soziologiaren arteko uztarketa dakarte, mugikortasuna pertsonen eguneroko espazioaren berrantolaketa gisa ulertuz. Era berean, *bizileku-mugikortasunari* buruzko ikerketek bizilagunen arteko harremanak, auzo- eta hiri-egituraren aldaketak eta gizarte-sareen osaera ere kontuan hartzen dituzte (Coulter & Thomas, 2020).

Bizileku-mugikortasuna funtsezko kontzeptua da hainbat arlotan. Demografiaren alorrean, biztanleriaren barruko mugimendu horiek populazioaren banaketari eta eskualdeen hazkundeari eta galerari buruzko azterlanetan sartzen dira. Geografian adituek *bizileku-mugikortasuna* aztertzen dute auzoen eraldaketa edo gentrifikazio-prozesuetan daukan rolagatik; maiz ikusten da etxebizitza-aukeraketak eta biztanleen desplazamenduen pilaketak auzo bateko egitura sozioekonomikoa eraldatzen dutela.

Laburbilduz, *bizileku-mugikortasuna* pertsonen bizileku-aldaketei buruzko kontzeptu gakoa da, diziplina anitzetan landua. Kontzeptuaren analisisian ikuspegi metodologikoak, kontzeptualak eta teorikoak kontuan hartu dira. Azken batean, *bizileku-mugikortasunak* gizartearen egitura eta lurralde-antolaketa ulertzeko funtsezko gakoa ematen baitu.

Fenomeno hori neurtzeko maiz aztertzen da zer proportziok aldatzen duten bizilekua epe jakin batean (esaterako, urtebeteko tartean bizilekua aldatu duten pertsonen ehunekoa) edo batez besteko bizileku-aldaketa kopurua biztanleko. Hego Euskal Herriko testuinguruari begiratuta, zentsuko 2024ko datuen arabera (INE, 2024), herritar gehienak (% 59,2) ez dira bizi jaio ziren udalerrian, beste batean baizik. Pentsatzekoa da bizileku-aldaketa horiek eragin soziolinguistikoa dutela jatorrizko eta helmugako udalerrietan, bizileku-aldaketa horietako askok ingurune soziolinguistikoz aldatzea baitakarte.

Ikerketa-galderak

Bizileku-mugikortasunaren fluxuek errealitate soziolinguistikoan duten eraginaren gaiari heldu nahiko genioke artikulu honetan eta honako ikerketa-galderei lehen erantzun behin-behineko bat eman. Aztertu nahi da ea nola eragiten duen lurralde-jatorri soziolinguistiko ezberdina duen hiztunen bizileku-mugikortasunak helmugako udalerrietako hizkuntza-erabileran. Eta horren erakusgarri bezala, testu honetan zehazki galdera hauei erantzun nahi zaie:

1. Arnasguneetan nagusiki gaztelania erabiltzen duten pertsonen artean zenbatek dute jatorria ingurune erdaldunagoetan?
2. Erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuetan nagusiki euskara erabiltzen duten pertsonen artean, zenbatek dute jatorria ingurune euskaldunagoetan?

Iturriak eta metodologia

Iturriak

Galderen izaera ikusita, paradigma positibistaren barruan, informazio kuantitatiboa baliatu da erantzunak bilatzeko. Iturri nagusi gisa Espainiako Estatistika Institutuaren (INE) *Encuesta de Características Esenciales de la Población y Viviendas* (ECEPOV) erabili da. Eragiketa hori 2021. urtean egin zuen INEk urte horretako zentsua lantzeko. Zehazki, ECEPOVen mikro-datueta jo da: hizkuntzari buruzko aldagaiak landu dira batetik; eta lurraldeari buruzko informazioa (hiztunen bizilekuari, jaiolekuari eta gurasoen jaiolekuari buruzkoa) bestetik. Horretarako, INEa egindako berariazko datu-eskari baten bidez, ECEPOVeko lurralde-informazioa nagusitasun-eremuka lantzeko moduan eskuratu da.

Iturri horrek honako bi baldintzak betetzen ditu. Batetik, aztergaiei buruzko informazioa biltzen du; bai euskara-gaztelaniaren erabilerari buruzkoa eta baita hiztunen bizileku eta jaiolekuari buruzko informazio zehatza ere. Bestetik, laginek neurri egokia dute, eta horrek lanketak eskatzen duen desagregazio-mailarekin lan egitea ahalbidetu du. Ikerketa honen unibertsoa 2021. urtean, ECEPOV eragiketa egin zen garaian, euren bizilekua Hego Euskal Herrian zuten 2.799.463 hiztunek osatu dute. Eta lagina, berriz, aipatu ikerketaren mikro-datueta azaltzen diren 27.763 erregistroek.

Iturri horietan oinarrituta, hau da ikerketaren metodologia-hautua: ECEPOV ikerketan oinarrituta, aztertu nahi den gaia lantzeko adierazle esanguratsu

berriak sortzea eta horien lehen irakurketa bat egitea oinarritzko estatistika deskriptiboaren tresnak baliatuta. Jarraian aurkezten dira ECEPOVetik abiatuta sortu diren adierazle berriak.

Familiako eta lagunarteko erabilerari buruzko adierazleak

ECEPOVen hiztunek hiru eremutan egiten duten erabilerari buruzko informazioa jasotzen da: familian egiten dutena (1), lagunartekoa (2) eta lantokian edo ikastokian egiten dutena (3).

Hizkuntza bakoitza zein neurritan erabiltzen duten galdetzen zaie elkarrizketatuei (euskara, gaztelania, eta beste hizkuntzarik ezagutzen dutenei hizkuntza horri buruzko erabilera-mailari buruz ere galdetuz). ECEPOVen erabilerari buruz galdetzeko modu horrek akatsa dakar berekin. 7. taulan ikus daiteke, adibidez, hiztunen kopuru esanguratsu batek ezinezkoak diren konbinaketak erantzuten dituela. Adibidez, «beti» gaztelaniaz aritzen direla esaten duten askok aipatzen dute ondoren euskara batzuetan, maiz edo beti erabiltzen dutela. Eta berdin alderantziz.

2. taula. Hiztunen euskararen familiako erabilera, gaztelaniaren familiako erabileraren arabera. Hego Euskal Herria, 2021.

		Gaztelaniaren erabilera familian				GUZTIRA
		Inoiz ez	Batzuetan	Maiz	Beti	
Euskararen erabilera familian	Inoiz ez	39.946	48.267	54.454	1.516.881	1.659.548
		% 1,4	% 1,7	% 2,0	% 55,0	% 60,1
	Batzuetan	1.269	16.589	84.480	375.316	477.654
		% 0,0	% 0,6	% 3,1	% 13,6	% 17,3
	Maiz	483	64.812	200.296	61.236	326.827
		% 0,0	% 2,3	% 7,3	% 2,2	% 11,8
	Beti	96.707	85.341	20.116	94.211	296.375
		% 3,5	% 3,1	% 0,7	% 3,4	% 10,7
GUZTIRA		138.405	215.009	359.346	2.047.644	2.760.404
		% 5,0	% 7,8	% 13,0	% 74,2	% 100,0

Baliozkotasun-arazoak dituzte, hortaz, honako datuek. Euskal demolinguistikan hizkuntza-erabileraz galdetzeko ohituraz baliatu izan diren galderak² egokiagoak izanik, ECEPOV ez da tamalez tradizio sendoago horri lotu galderak egiteko erabilitako moduan. Eta ziur aski, hautu horrek datuen kalitatea kaltetuko zuen. Dena den, ez dira guztiz baliogabeak horrela eskuratutako datuak eta oinarri horretatik abiatuta egin da lanketa. Zehazki, taulako konbinaketa posible guztiak sailkatuta, honako hiru multzotan banatu dira hiztunak:

1. Etxean nagusiki (edo soilik) euskaraz ari direnak

- Euskaraz Batzuetan + Gaztelaniaz Inoiz ez
- Euskaraz Maiz + Gaztelaniaz Inoiz ez/Batzuetan
- Euskaraz Beti + Gaztelaniaz Inoiz ez/Batzuetan/Maiz

2. Bietara berdintsu ari direnak

- Euskaraz Inoiz ez + Gaztelaniaz Inoiz ez
- Euskaraz Batzuetan + Gaztelaniaz Batzuetan
- Euskaraz Maiz + Gaztelaniaz Maiz
- Euskaraz Beti + Gaztelaniaz Beti

3. Nagusiki (edo soilik) gaztelaniaz ari direnak

- Euskaraz Inoiz ez + Gaztelaniaz Batzuetan/Maiz/Beti
- Euskaraz Batzuetan + Gaztelaniaz Maiz/Beti
- Euskaraz Maiz + Gaztelaniaz Beti

Hiztunak hiru multzo horietan landu dira, hortaz, sortutako adierazlean. Oro har, ECEPOVen familiako erabilerari buruz horrela landutako datuak ez dira askorik urruntzen EUSTATEk etxeko erabileraz landu izan dituenetatik.

Familiako erabilera lantzeko erabilitako irizpide berberak erabili dira lagunarteko erabilerari buruzko adierazlea kalkulatzeko.

Erabilerari buruzko bi adierazle horiekin egin da lan ikerketa honetan: familiako erabilerarekin eta lagunartekoarekin.

2. Bai Inkesta Soziolinguistikoan eta bai EUSTAT eta NASTATen zentsuetan prozedura egokiagoak landu izan dira erabilerari buruzko informazioa eskuratzeko. Galdera bakarrean galdetzen zaio elkarriketatuari egiten duen euskara-erdaren erabilerari buruz.

Bizilekuari eta norbere zein gurasoen jaiolekuari lotutako adierazleak

ECEPOV-en, berez, ikergairako funtsezkoak diren honako aldagaiak buruzko informazioa biltzen da zehatz:

- Hiztunaren bizileku-udalerria.
- Hiztunaren jaiotze-tokia.
- Hiztunaren 1. gurasoaren jaiotze-tokia.
- Hiztunaren 2. gurasoaren jaiotze-tokia.

ECEPOVen lagineko hiztun bakoitza hartu, eta lau aldagai horietarako, bizileku eta jaiolekuaren ezaugarri soziolinguistikoei buruzko balioak esleitu zaizkie, eremu geografikoei buruzko balioak UEMak (2025) landutako Hego Euskal Herriko udalerrien sailkapenetik hartuta³. Horrela, honako lau aldagaiak sortu dira:

- **Bizilekuko erabilera:** Hiztunak bizi diren udalerriko euskararen erabilera-maila⁴.
- **Jaiolekuko erabilera:** Hiztuna jaio zen udalerriko euskararen erabilera maila⁵.
- **1. gurasoaren jaiolekuko erabilera:** Hiztunaren 1. gurasoa jaio zen udalerriko euskararen erabilera-maila.
- **2. gurasoaren jaiolekuko erabilera:** Hiztunaren 2. gurasoa jaio zeneko udalerriko euskararen erabilera-maila.

Lau adierazle horietako bakoitza, 8. taulako lehen zutabeaz azaltzen diren tarteetan sailkatu da eta horiek nagusitasun-eremuen sailkapenarekin (bigarren zutabea) lotu dira, taulan ikusten den korrespondentziarekin.

3. Horretarako lanketa berezia egin du INEk UEMaren eskari bati erantzunda.

4. «Erabilera hurbila» adierazle sintetikoa erabili da, udalerriko herritarrek etxean egiten duten erabileraren eta udalerriko kaleetan neurtutakoaren batezbestekoaren bidez kalkulatu; multzokatze xehea. Jatorrizko iturriak: EUSTAT, 2021 eta Soziolinguistika Klusterra, 2021

5. Berez egokiagoa litzateke hiztunak zein gurasoak jaio izandako udalerriak, egungo erabileraren arabera baino, jaio eta hazi zirenen erabilera-mailaren arabera lantzea. Oraingoan, ordea, ez dago horretarako aukerarik.

3. taula. Udalerrietako euskararen erabilaren arabera udalerrien multzokatzea: multzokatze xehea eta nagusitasun-eremuak.

Euskararen erabilera hurbila udalerrian	Nagusitasun-eremuak
Euskaraz % 90-100	ARNASGUNE BETEAK (euskararen nagusitasuna handia den udalerriak)
Euskaraz % 80-89,9	
Euskaraz % 70-79,9	ARNASGUNE ERASANAK (euskararen nagusitasuna erabatekoa ez den udalerriak)
Euskaraz % 60-69,9	
Euskaraz % 50-59,9	NAGUSITASUN ARGIRIK GABEKO UDALERRIAK
Euskaraz % 40-49,9	
Euskaraz % 30-39,9	ERDARAREN NAGUSITASUN EZ ERABATEKO UDALERRIAK
Euskaraz % 20-29,9	
Euskaraz % 10-19,9	ERDARAREN NAGUSITASUNA HANDIA DEN UDALERRIAK
Euskaraz % 10 baino gutxiago	
Hego Euskal Herriatik kanpo	Hego Euskal Herriatik kanpo

Iturria: egileek landua.

Hiztunak bizi diren eta eurak edo euren gurasoak jaio ziren tokien arteko alderaketarako adierazleak

Hiztunen egungo bizilekua batetik eta euren zein euren gurasoen jaiolekua bestetik aintzat hartuta⁶, honako hiru adierazleak sortu ditugu:

- Hiztunen bizilekuko eta jaiolekuko batez besteko euskararen erabilera-mailaren alderaketa (erabilera hurbilaren arabera).
- Hiztunen bizilekuko eta 1. gurasoaren jaiolekuko euskararen erabilera-mailaren alderaketa (erabilera hurbilaren arabera).
- Hiztunen bizilekuko eta 2. gurasoaren jaiolekuko euskararen erabilera-mailaren alderaketa (erabilera hurbilaren arabera).

Adierazle horiek honako hiru balioak har ditzakete:

- Zona erdaldunagoan jaioak.
- Toki berean edo euskararen erabilera-maila bereko tokian jaioak.
- Zona euskaldunagoan jaioak.

6. Alderaketa horiek udalerrien multzokatze xehearen arabera landu dira.

Bizileku-mugikortasuna eta euskararen erabilera Hego Euskal Herrian

Lehenago azaldu bezala, nagusitasun-eremuak ekosistema soziolinguistikoko oso bateko baldintzak sintetizatzen dituen adierazle gisa baliatu daitezke: hiztun-proportzio batzuk, hizkuntza-erabileraren praktika bat, hizkuntza bata eta bestea erabiltzearen inguruko arau-multzo bat, gaitasun kolektibo eta indibidualak, transmisio-kate bat...

Kontua da, norbanakoaren baldintzapen soziolinguistikokoak ulertzen jarrita, uneko bizilekuan dituen gain, oso interesgarria dela bere jatorriko guneetako baldintzak ere kontuan hartzea. Norbera gaur egun bizi dena ez den toki batean jaio bada eta urte batzuk eman baditu bertan, pertsona horren biografia linguistikoa eta bizipenak baldintzatuko ditu jaioleku horretako egoerak. Era berean, bakoitzari hizkuntza-gaitasunak, -ohiturak eta -ideologiak transmititu dizkieten pertsonak, norberaren gurasoak kasu, beste ingurune soziolinguistikoko bateko baldintzetatik baldin badatoz, transmisio horren baitan eragina izan dezake jatorri horrek. Gaur egun toki berean jaio eta hazi diren pertsonak nolabaiteko oinordekotza soziolinguistikoko oso desberdina jaso dezakete gurasoengandik, hizkuntzaren sozializazio-prozesua erabat baldintzatuz.

Euskararen erabilera-maila jaiolekuaren eta bizilekuaren arabera

Ikus dezagun azaltzen ari garen hau datuen bidez. Erakusgarri bezala, begiratu dezakegu nola aldatzen diren hiztunen artean lagunartean nagusiki euskaraz aritzen direnen proportzioak, haien jaiolekuaren eta bizilekuaren nagusitasun-eremua konbinatuta aztertuz. 4. eta 5. tauletan ikus daitekeen bezala, hiztunen jaiolekuak eta egungo bizilekuak, eta baita gurasoenak ere, hirurek baldintzatzen dute haien erabilera-maila. Adibidez:

- Egungo bizilekuari erreparatuz, erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerrietan bizi diren hiztunen artean, % 2,1ek erabiltzen dute euskara nagusiki; kopuru hori % 76,1era igotzen da arnasmune beteetan. Tarteko eremuek tarteko balioak erakusten dituzte.
- Jaiolekuari erreparatuz, erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerrietan jaiotakoen artean % 3,4k soilik dute euskara lagunarteko hizkuntza nagusi; kopuru hori % 71,9raigo igotzen da arnasmune beteetan jaiotakoen artean.
- Norberaren jaiolekuak ez ezik, gurasoenak ere zerikusi argia du hiztunen erabilera-mailan: gurasoak erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuan jaiotakoak dituztenen artean % 4,3k egiten dute nagusiki euskaraz; gurasoak arnasmunekoak dituztenen % 60,4k.

- Norbere bizilekua eta jaiolekua, bi aldagaiak uztartuta, aldeak are esanguratsuagoak dira: erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerrietan jaio eta bizi diren herritarren artean % 2,4k erabiltzen dute euskara nagusiki; % 65,8k arnasguneetan jaio eta bizi direnen artean⁷.
- Erabilera apalena Hego Euskal Herrikan jaioetako hiztunek erakusten dute. Dena den, aipagarria da horien artean ere bizilekuak eragin argia duela. Horrela, Hego Euskal Herrikan jaio baina arnasgunean bizi diren hiztunen artean erabilera-maila ohargarria da, horien arteko % 9,7k nagusiki euskaraz egiten dute lagunartean, Hegoaldeko hiztun guztien batez besteko maila (% 8,7) gaindituz.

Horrela, bada, bizilekuak, norbere jaiolekuak eta gurasoenak, hiru aldagaiek dute eragin handia erabileran. Eta hiru aldagaien eragina metatu egiten da: erabateko logika erakusten dute, alde horretatik, landutako datuek.

4. taula. Lagunartean nagusiki euskara erabiltzen dutenen proportzioa hiztunen jaiolekuaren eta egungo bizilekuaren arabera. Hego Euskal Herria, 2021(multzo bakoitzarekiko %ak gelaxka bakoitzean).

	BIZILEKUA				GUZTIAK
	Erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerriak	Erdararen nagusitasun ez erabateko udalerriak	Nagusitasun argirik gabeko udalerriak	Arnasguneak (erasanak eta beteak)	
Hego EHTik kanpo	0,3	0,6	5,0	9,7	0,8
Erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerriak	2,4	8,5	27,9	33,4	3,4
Erdararen nagusitasun ez erabateko udalerriak	6,4	22,0	30,1	33,6	20,6
Nagusitasun argirik gabeko udalerriak	11,8	24,2	46,7	44,3	39,3
Arnasguneak (erasanak eta beteak)	21,5	34,3	58,1	65,8	58,2
GUZTIAK	2,1	15,3	36,2	51,9	8,7

Iturria: ECEPOV, 2021. Egileek landua.

7. Kasu honetan azpilaginen neurriek ez dute ematen arnasguneen barruan bereizteko.

5. taula. Lagunartean nagusiki euskara erabiltzen dutenen proportzioa hiztunen egungo bizilekuaren, jaiolekuaren edo gurasoen jaiolekuaren arabera. Hego Euskal Herria, 2021 (multzo bakoitzarekiko %ak gelaxka bakoitzean).

		Erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerriak (euskararen erabilera <% 20)	Erdararen nagusitasun ez erabateko udalerriak (euskararen erabilera % 20-40)	Nagusita- sun argirik gabeko udalerriak (euskararen erabilera % 40-60)	Arnasgune erasanak (euskararen erabilera % 60-80)	Arnasgune beteak (euskararen erabilera >% 80)	GUZTIAK
EGUNGO BIZILEKUA		2,1	15,3	36,2	48,7	76,1	8,7
JAIOLEKUA	0,8	3,4	20,6	39,3	56,1	71,9	8,7
GURASOEN JAIOLEKUA ¹	2,0	4,3	23,5	36,4	49,0	60,4	8,7

* ECEPOVen elkarriketatuen bi gurasoen jaiolekuaz galdetzen da, banaka. Guraso guztien kopuruak batu eta horien gainean kalkulatu dira lan honetako tauletan gurasoei dagozkien ehuneko orokorrak.

Iturria: ECEPOV, 2021. Egileek landua.

Beraz, datuetan ikusten da **testuinguruak hizkuntza-praktika indibidualetan eragin erabakigarria duela**. Toki berean jaiotako guztiek ez dutela joera bera, toki berean bizi direnek ere ez, eta toki guztietako gurasoak dituztenek ere ez; hori gauza jakina da. **Hala eta guztiz, joera orokor gisa, hiru adierazle hauek garrantzitsuak dira pertsonen gaur egungo hizkuntza-praktikak ulertzeko. Eta hiruren arteko harremana eta elkarrenergina aztertzeak argia ekar dezake tokian tokiko egoerak eta joerak interpretatzeko.**

Jo dezagun, beraz, ikerketa-galderei zuzenean erantzuten lagundu dezaketen datuak aztertzeraz.

Gaztelaniaren erabilera arnasguneetan

Definizioz, arnasguneetan euskara da nagusi erabileran. Argitu behar dena, berriz, honakoa da: bertan egiten den gaztelaniaren zein zati dagokie bertako jatorria duten hiztunei eta zein zati ingurune erdaldunagoetatik etorritakoei? Zehatzago galdetuta, nagusiki erdaraz aritzen diren hiztunen zein zati da ingurune erdaldunagoetatik etorria? galdera hori belaunaldi arteko ikuspegiz ere landuta.

6. taula. Nagusiki gaztelania erabiltzen duen hiztun-multzoaren osaera, hiztunen eta haien gurasoen jatorriaren arabera. Hegoaldeko arnasguneak (beteak eta erasanak; euskararen erabilera % 60tik gora dutenak), 2021.

	Pisua biztanlerian (%)	Pisua familian nagusiki gaztelania erabiltzen dutenen artean (%)	Pisua lagunartean nagusiki gaztelania erabiltzen dutenen artean (%)
Norbere jaiolekuaren arabera:			
Zona erdaldunagoan jaioak	41,8	71,8	72,8
Toki berean jaioak (edo erabilera-maila bertsua duen batean)	56,0	27,3	26,6
Zona euskaldunagoan jaioak	2,2	1,0	0,5
	100,0	100,0	100,0
Gurasoen jaiolekuaren arabera:			
Zona erdaldunagoan jaioak	54,5	83,0	81,8
Toki berean jaioak (edo erabilera-maila bertsua duen batean)	40,7	14,8	15,4
Zona euskaldunagoan jaioak	4,8	2,2	2,8
	100,0	100,0	100,0
Laburpen adierazlea:			
Norbera edo gurasoetako bat gutxienez zona erdaldunagoan jaioak	69,4	91,6	90,8
Gainerakoak	30,6	8,4	9,2
	100,0	100,0	100,0

Iturria: ECEPOV, 2021. Egileek landua.

Norberaren jaioterria kontuan hartuta, zona erdaldunago batean jaiotakoak arnasguneetan bizi direnen % 41,8 dira; baina familian edo lagunartean nagusiki gaztelaniaz dihardutenen artean proportzio hori askoz handiagoa da, % 71,8 eta % 72,8, hurrenez hurren. Aldiz, tokian bertan jaiotakoek populazioaren erdia baino zertxobait gehiago osatzen dute (% 56), baina gaztelania-hiztunetan haien pisua nabarmen jaisten da (% 27,3 familian eta % 26,6 lagunartean). Beraz, arnasguneetan gaztelania erabiltzen dutenen artean, hamarretik zazpi baino gehiago zona erdaldunago batean jaiotakoak dira.

Gurasoen jaioterriari erreparatuta, eragina are argiagoa da. Arnasguneetako biztanleen erdiek (% 54,5) gurasoak zona erdaldunagoetan jaiotakoak dituzte; baina nagusiki gaztelania erabiltzen duten hiztunen artean proportzio hori % 83,0 eta % 81,8koa da. Aldiz, gurasoak tokian bertan jaiotakoak dituztenak populazioaren % 40,7 badira ere, familian eta lagunartean nagusiki gaztelaniaz egiten dutenen artean % 14-15 dira.

Bi faktoreak (norberaren eta gurasoen jatorria) batera hartuta, ikusten da norbera edo gurasoetako bat gutxienez zona erdaldunagoan jaiotakoa izatea arnasguneetako populazioaren % 69,4aren kasuan gertatzen dela. Baina nagusiki gaztelania darabilten hiztunen artean proportzio hori % 91,6koa da familian, eta % 90,8koa lagunartean. Hau da, arnasguneetan nagusiki gaztelania erabiltzen dutenen artean hamarretik bederatzik gutxienez jatorri-lotura dute zona erdaldunago batekin.

Euskararen erabilera erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuetan

Jarraian bizileku-mugikortasunaren eragin soziolinguistikoa kontrako norabidean aztertuko da. Gaur egun erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerrietan (euskararen erabilera hurbila % 20aren azpitik) bizi diren hiztunen artean euskara gaztelania baino gehiago erabiltzen dutenen multzoaren jaiolekua eta haien gurasoena.

7. taula. Nagusiki euskara erabiltzen duen hiztun-multzoaren osaera, hiztunen eta haien gurasoen jatorriaren arabera. Hegoaldeko erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerriak (euskararen erabilera % 20aren azpitik dutenak), 2021.

	Pisua biztanlerian (%)	Pisua familian nagusiki euskara erabiltzen dutenen artean (%)	Pisua lagunartean nagusiki euskara erabiltzen dutenen artean (%)
NORBERE JAIOLEKUAREN ARABERA:			
Zona erdaldunagoan jaioak	29,8	8,6	6,4
Toki berean jaioak (edo erabilera-maila bertsua duen batean)	65,7	69,8	73,6
Zona euskaldunagoan jaioak	4,5	21,7	20,0
	100,0	100,0	100,0
GURASOEN JAIOLEKUAREN ARABERA:			
Zona erdaldunagoan jaioak	50,4	18,6	18,7
Toki berean jaioak (edo erabilera-maila bertsua duen batean)	42,9	48,8	54,2
Zona euskaldunagoan jaioak	6,8	32,6	27,1
	100,0	100,0	100,0
LABURPEN ADIERAZLEA:			
Norbera edo gurasoetako bat gutxienez zona euskaldunagoan jaioak	11,7	44,5	37,8
Gainerakoak	88,3	55,5	62,2
	100,0	100,0	100,0

Iturria: ECEPOV, 2021. Egileek landua.

Jaiolekuaren arabeko azterketan ikus daiteke erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerrietan bizi diren biztanleen artean, zona euskaldunagoan jaiotakoak % 4,5 direla; baina familian edo lagunartean nagusiki euskaraz dihardutenen multzoan, berriz, zona euskaldunagoan jaiotakoen proportzioa 5 aldiz handiagoa dela (% 21,7 eta % 20,0, hurrenez hurren). Hau da, nagusiki euskara erabiltzen duen biztanleriaren zatian, 5etik bat baino gehiago zona euskaldunago batean jaiotakoa da.

Gurasoen jaiolekuari erreparatzen badiogu, eragina kuantitatiboki handiagoa dela ikus daiteke. Gurasoak zona euskaldunagoetan jaiotakoak dituztenak erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuetako populazioaren % 6,8 dira. Baina familian nagusiki euskaraz dihardutenak % 32,6 eta lagunartean nagusiki euskaraz dihardutenak % 27,1 dira; proportzio orokorra boskoiztu edo laukoiztu egiten da nagusiki euskara erabiltzen dutenen artean, beraz. Familiarekin nagusiki euskaraz mintzo direnen ia hirutik baten gurasoak zona euskaldunagoan jaiotakoak dira; eta lagunartean nagusiki euskaraz aritzen direnen lautik baten gurasoak dira zona euskaldunagoan jaiotakoak.

Bi faktoreak, norberaren jaiolekua eta gurasoena konbinatuta aztertuz gero, ikusten da norbera edo gurasoetako bat gutxienez zona euskaldunagoan jaioa dela erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuko populazioaren % 11,7aren kasuan. Familiarekin nagusiki euskaraz aritzen diren pertsonen % 44,5aren kasuan norbere edo gurasoen jaiolekua zona euskaldunago batean dago. Eta lagunartean nagusiki euskaraz aritzen direnen artean, berriz, % 37,8 dira. Beraz, proportzioa laukoitza edo hirukoitza da. Familiarekin edo lagunartean nagusiki euskara erabiltzen dutenen artean, jatorria (norberarena edo gurasoetako batena) zona euskaldunagoan dutenak hamarretik lau inguru dira.

Ondorioak

Azterlanak agerian uzten du hiztunen jaioterria eta bizilekua biak direla hizkuntza-portaeretan eragina duten faktore garrantzitsuak. Lehenak hizkuntza-sozializazioaren baldintzak ezartzen ditu, neurri handi batean. Eta bigarrenak, berriz, hizkuntza-erabilerarako aukerak eta erosotasun-baldintzak. Gainera, ikus liteke ekosistema linguistiko batek bizileku-mugikortasunetik jasotzen dituen hiztunak bere ohiko mintzajardunaren dinamikan integratzeko gaitasun partziala duela; eta hiztunen dentsitatearen zein mugikortasun-fluxuen tamainaren arabera izango dela arrakastatsua integrazio soziolinguistiko hori.

Lehen ikerketa-galderari erantzunez, emaitzek erakusten dute arnaguneetan erdaraz nagusiki aritzen diren hiztunen gehiengo oso handiak ingurune erdaldunagoetan duela jatorria; ingurune erdaldunagoetan jaiotakoak dira hamarretik zazpi eta horietan sortutako gurasoak dituzte hamarretik zortzik. Arnaguneetako hiztunen hizkuntza-bilakaera prozesuak aztertu eta interpretatzeko garaian bizileku-mugikortasunaren fluxuak elementu zentral gisa kontuan hartu beharra agerikoa da.

Bigarren ikerkerta-galderari erantzunez, esan daiteke erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuetan euskaraz aritzen diren hiztunen artean pisu ohargarria dutela euren jatorria ingurune euskaldunagoetan dutenek. Zona euskaldunagoetan jaiotako pertsonak edo horien seme-alabek erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuetako euskararen erabilerari egiten dioten ekarpena biztanlerian duten pisua baino nabarmen handiagoa da. Ezin da ulertu erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuetako euskararen ekosistema, zona euskaldunagoetatik heldutakoen eragina aintzat hartu gabe.

Eremu euskaldunagoetan dauden euskararen aldeko baldintzek hiztun osoak sortzeko eta erreproduzitzeko ahalmena ematen diote hiztun-komunitate osoari. Eta erreproduzio-ahalmen horrek ez du soilik tokian bertan eragiten; bizileku-mugikortasunaren fluxuei loturik, lurralde-eremu askoz zabalagoetan du eragina, baita euskal hiztunen komunitateak erreproduzitzeko zailtasun eta oztopo handienak dituen eremuetan ere. Arnasguneen eta zona euskaldunen ekarpena, hortaz, zona horietatik harago, euskararen eremu osoan hautematen da.

Gogoeta batzuk, aurrera begira

Ikerketa eta esku-hartzea

Azterketa honetan baliatutakoak hurbilpenak dira, zeharkako iturrietan oinarritu-takoak. Fenomeno honen gutxieneko dimentsio batzuk erakusteko balio dute. Baina, era berean, sakonago ikertzeko eta berariazko ikerketa-ibilbide bat lantzeko heldulekuak ikus daitezke bertan, ikerketen parametroak finduz eta garatuz gero.

Bizileku-mugikortasuna kontuan hartzen duen ikerketa-ildo demolinguistikoa nondik garatu badago eta merezi luke hemen egindako lehen lanketa gehiago fintzea: jaiolekuaz eta uneko bizilekuaz harago, biografia linguistikoko bizileku desberdinak kontuan har daitezke; aitona-amonen belaunaldirainoko jatorriak azter daitezke; hiztunen edo euren gurasoen jaiolekuek jaiotza-unean zituzten baldintzak kontuan har daitezke... Hipotesi orokor gisa, pentsa liteke, ikerketa honetan bizileku-mugikortasunak ingurune batzuetan eta besteetan duen eragin handia are indartsuago azalduko litzatekeela ikerketa prozedura zehatzagoekin eginez gero.

Hamarkada batzuetatik hona, herritarron bizimoduan eta bizi-ohituretan gertatu diren aldaketa garrantzitsu batzuk mugikortasunarekin lotutakoak dira; bizileku-mugikortasunaren fluxuak bezala, eguneroko mugikortasun-

ohiturak, nazioarteko hipermugikortasuna (turismoari, ikasketei edo karrera profesionalei lotutakoa, besteak beste...) eta abar. Aldaketa hauek dinamika soziolinguistikoetan zeresan handia dutela oharturik, gaiari bizileku-mugikortasuna baino askoz zabalagoa den fenomeno gisa begiratu behar zaio. Lurraldeen eta biztanlerien arteko lotura eta harremana asko aldatu da. Horrek bilakaera soziolinguistikoaren dimentsio espazialean arreta jartzea ekarri behar luke. Ohiko adierazle soziolinguistikoetatik haragoko batzuk kontuan hartzeko beharra azaleratzen du. Ikerlerro horren garapenetik mugimendu-fluxu batzuek (bizilekukoak, laboralak, aisialdikoak, komertzialak...) euskararen erabileraren erraztaile eta beste batzuek oztopatzaile gisa jokatzeko dutela identifikatzeko gaitasuna eskuratuz gero, kontuan hartu ahal izango liriateke hizkuntza gutxituaren indarberritzerako estrategietan. Hizkuntza-politikaren eremuan eta esku-hartze soziolinguistikoarenean zenbait hautu egiteko eta zenbait bide berri zabaltzeko baliagarria litzateke. Lana edo aisialdia direla-eta gertatzen den mugikortasuna eta lurralde-fluxuak, esate baterako, ugaritu eta ohikotu egin dira euskal herritarren gaur egungo bizimoduan. Horrek elkarrekintza sozialaren eta lurraldeen arteko elkarrenergin soziolinguistikoen aldetik aldaketak ekarri ditu. Horiek ezagutzeko ikerketa-ildoan ahaleginak egon diren arren (Sorolla eta beste, 2021), garatzeko eta sakontzeko potentzial handia duen bidea da, zalantzarik gabe.

Ikuspegi kualitatibotik eta etnografikotik hiztunen biografia linguistikoan ekosistema soziolinguistikoz aldatzeari lotutako bizipenak ezagutzea ere ikerlerro interesgarria eta emankorra litzateke. Nola bizi dute hiztunek euskararen nagusitasun-eremuetatik erdararen nagusitasun-eremuetara bizileku-aldaketa? Zein gako daude ulertzeko batzuen aktibazio euskaltzalea eta beste batzuen praktika hegemonikotara egokitzea? Ez da garrantziarik gabeko ikergaia. Arnasguneetan jaio eta erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerrietan bizi diren hiztunen % 21,5ek euskara darabil nagusiki lagunartean (12. taula). Kopuru hori, kopuru handia da bizileku-testuinguru horren baitan. Datua beste aldera irakurtzea ere badago, ordea: arnasguneetan jaiotako eta ondoren erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuetara aldatutako hiztun gehienek ez dute euskara lagunarteko hizkuntza nagusi. Aurrerapena litzateke, arnasguneetatik etorritako hiztun horien artean euskarari eusten dioten eta erdarara lerratzen diren hiztunen ibilbide, bizipen eta jarretan sakontzea.

Hizkuntza biziberritzearen aldeko esku-hartze publiko eta sozialean aipatutako ikerlerroetatik eskuratutako ezagutza baliatzeko aukerak handiak liriateke. Ikuspegi horretatik, plan handiak edo esku-hartze txiki eta tokikoak planteatu daitezke. Baina, edozein kasutan, hizkuntza-politika eraginkorragoari begira asmatzeko aukerak handitzea ekarriko luketenak. Hirigintzan,

lurralde-antolaketan, mugikortasunean, eredu ekonomikoan edo espazioaren konfigurazioan eragina duten politikek eta esku-hartzeek errealitate soziolinguistikoa eraldatzen duten kontzientziatik, hizkuntza-politika integralaren estrategia koherente baten baitan egituratzea litzateke ikuspegi eraginkorrena.

Lurralde-jatorri erdaldunagoko biztanleria arnasguneetan

Zentzu horretan, lurralde-jatorri erdaldunagoko biztanleriaren harrera funtsezko erronka da arnasguneentzat. Nazioarteko migrazio-fluxuetan eta haien ondorioetan arreta jartzen hasia da euskal soziolinguistika, euskararen aldeko gizarte-mugimendua eta hizkuntza-politika publikoetako eragileak. Baina Euskal Herri barruko bizileku-mugikortasuna ere berariaz aztertu eta harrera-estrategia integratuak garatzea beharrezkoa da. Arnasguneetan euskararen erabileraren nagusitasuna bermatzeko, politika aurreratuak eta baliabide partekatuak behar dira, eguneroko mintzajarduna euskaraz mantentzea bilatzen dutenak. Euskaraz bizi den komunitatean migrazio soziolinguistikoa eman dadin baldintza materialak ziurtatu behar dira, batetik; eta komunitate-mailan bere errealitate soziolinguistikoarekiko kontzientzia eta identifikazioa sortzeko eta erreproduzitzeko bideak, bestetik.

Lurralde-jatorri euskaldunagoko biztanleria erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuetan

Eremu euskaldunagoetan jaiotako hiztunek erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuetako euskararen bizitasunean duten zeresanaz kontzientzia hartzeak ekar dezake, batetik, arnasguneen eta zona euskaldunen zaintza eta hedapena euskararen indarberritzearen helburua partekatzen duen ororen helburu komun gisa ulertzeko urrats garrantzitsua. Arnasguneen auziak euskaldun ororengan eragin zuzena duela ikusita, euskaltzale ororentzat garrantzitsua behar lukeela ohartzea. Azken batean, zona euskaldunagoek elikatu dute, hein garrantzitsuan, zona erdaldunagoetako alor euskalduna. Zona euskaldunago horien ahultzeak, hortaz, Euskal Herri osoan ekarriko lituzke ahultze-ondorioak.

Eta esku-hartzeari dagokionez, ekinbide berriak planteatzeko oinarri gisa joka dezake. Esate baterako, adibide gisa, euskararen presentzia handiagoko eremuetatik heldutako hiztunei begirako esku-hartzeak planteatu daitezke, euren euskalduntasunari eusten jarraitzeko eta erabilera-ohitura erdaldunetara asimilatzeke egon daitekeen joera nagusiari aurre egiteko bitartekoak eskainiz. Norberak dituen euskararen aldeko baldintza soziolinguistikoaren kontzientzia hartzera bideratutako ekimenak; hizkuntza-gatazken aurrean jokatzeko eta estres linguistikoa modu asertiboan kudeatzeko ahalduntze-ekimenak; euskarazko hizkuntza-ohiturak dituzten herritarrak saretzea bilatzen duten ekimenak...

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7. Euskalduntzearen inpaktua, lurraldearen euskalduntasunaren arabera. Euskararen indarberritzerako lurralde-estrategia baterantz

Iñaki Iurrebaso Biteri (UEMA)

Laburpena: Ikerketari dagokionez, Inkesta Soziolinguistikoa ustiatuta, ikusiko da euskaldun berrien euskararen erabilera-maila zeharo aldatzen dela bizi diren udalerriaren arabera: zenbat eta udalerri euskaldunagoa, orduan eta handiagoa erabilera. Errealitate horretatik ondorioztatuko da eremu euskaldunagoan egindako indarberritze-ahaleginak askoz ere fruitu ugariagoak eman dituela proportzioan, zona erdaldunagoetan egindakoak baino.

Ondoren, proposatzen da lurralde-estrategia bat komeni dela indarberritze-prozesuan aurreratzeko, lurralde euskaldunagoei motor-papera, aitzindaritzapapera, aitortuz; lurralde horiek euskara irradiatuz eta zabalduz... gainerako eremuak elikatzea bilatuz. Estrategia horren barruan, funtsezkoa izango da, batetik, motor-papera beteko duten lurraldeak bereziki zaintzea; eta bestetik, irradiatze hori gerta dadin bitarteko ahalik eta egokienak lantzea.

Lan honetan aurkezten dira, lehenik, euskalduntzearen aldeko ahaleginak lurraldean izandako inpaktuari buruzko ikerketa bat. Eta, ondoren, oinarritzko proposamen bat lurraldean esku hartzeari begira.

Gako-hitzak: hiztun berriak, erabilera, inpaktua, nagusitasun-eremuak, arnasguneak, hizkuntza-politika.

Sarrera: efizientzia eta inpaktuaren bila indarberritze-ahaleginean

Edozein politika publikok, edozein esku-hartze sozialerako egitasmok, egiten diren ahaleginekin ahalik eta eraginik handiena eskuratzea bilatu ohi du. Printzipio hori, jakina, aplikagarria da hizkuntza gutxituen aldeko lanera ere.

Euskararen alde azken hamarkadetan egindako ahalegina erreferentziazkoa da hizkuntza gutxituen eremuan. 60ko hamarkadan euskararen alde sortu zen olatuak aspalditik zetorren galera-joera etetea eta itzulbiratzea ekarri zuen Hego Euskal Herrian¹. XX. mendearen amaiera arte, indarberritze-aldi argia bizi izan zuen euskarak, bultzada sozialak eta frankismo ondoko politika berriek eraginda. Azken bi hamarkadetako datuek, ordea, indarberritze-prozesua geldotze-fase batean sartu dela erakusten digute (Iurrebaso, 2024). Aurrera begira landu diren proiektioek, gainera, atzerakada-fase berri batean sar gaitezkeela erakutsi digute (Siadeco, 2025). Gauzak doazen bidetik jarraituz gero, euskararen komunitateak erreakzionatzen ez badu eta neurriko politikak bideratzen ez badira, galera-fase berri horrek honakoak ekar ditzake, besteak beste: hiztunen multzo trinkoenaren ahultzea, arnasguneen galera eta belaunaldi berrietan azken hamarkadetan lortutako aurrerapauso sendoetan atzera egiten hastea.

Testuinguru horretan, bi funtsezko ideia aipatu izan ditugu lehenago (Iurrebaso eta Goikoetxea, 2025): batetik, beharrezkoa da euskararen aldeko jende saila *esnatzea*, egoeraz jabetzea eta erreakzionatzea. Bestetik, beharrezkoa da euskara lehentasunetara ekartzea, bai maila pertsonalean, baita maila politikoan ere. Horrek eskatzen du orain baino ahalegin handiagoa egitea euskararen alde, euskararentzat baliabide gehiago bideratuz, besteak beste.

Horrekin batera, ordea, badago gure ustez funtsezkoa den hirugarren ideia bat: lortu beharko genuke euskararen aldeko esku-hartzea geroz eta efizienteagoa izatea, ditugun baliabide beti mugatuekin geroz eta aurrerabide handiagoa eskuratzen saiatuz. Eta lortu beharko genuke geroz eta inpaktu handiagoa, gure lanarekin geroz eta gehiago hurbiltzea gure helburuetara.

Berez, ez da berria gure indarberritze-prozesuan inpaktua eta efizientzia bilatzea. 1960ko olatuak, adibidez, irizpide argi bat izan du hasieratik gaur arte: lehentasuna belaunaldi berrien euskalduntzean jartzea. Esango genuke inplizituki efizientzia- eta inpaktu-irizpideak daudela oinarrian: batetik, haurrek errazago ikasiko dute hizkuntza helduek baino. Bestetik, fruitu ugariagoak emango ditu bizi-itxaropen luzea duten hiztunengan eragiteak, adin handiagoko (eta bizi-esperantza laburragoko) herritarrengan eragiteak baino. Oinarritzko irizpide hori aplikatu izan da gurean, arrakasta argiz aplikatu ere.

1. Hego Euskal Herria edo Hegoalde deitzen diogu Espainiako estatuaren menpe dagoen Euskal Herriko zatia. Lurralde hau, administratiboki Euskal Autonomia Erkidegoak eta Nafarroako Foru Komunitateak osatzen dute (Trebiñuko konderria eta Villaverde Turtziozeko udalerria, administratiboki Gaztela Leon eta Kantabriaren menpe daudenak, gure ikerketa eremutik kanpo geldituko dira).

Iruditzen zaigu, adinaren ardatz funtsezkoaz gain, geure buruari galdetu beharko geniokeela zein beste alderditan egon daitezkeen alde esanguratsuak efizientzia- eta inpaktu-irizpideak aintzat hartuta. Euskal Herriko gizartea osatzen duten zein ataletan eta zein prozesutan izan daitekeen emankorragoa eragitea, eta zeinetan eragiteak ez duen hainbesteko fruiturik ekarriko, oro har. Gure ustez, XXI. mendeko euskalgintzak asmatu beharko luke, lehenik, efizientzia- eta inpaktu-maila ezberdindu horiek atzematen. Eta bigarrenik, horren arabera esku-hartzeak fintzen.

Norabide horretan ekarpen xume bat izan nahi luke lan honek. Ikerlan honetan, esku-hartzeen efizientzia eta inpaktua aztertzerakoan funtsezko izan daitekeen ardatz bat landuko dugu: lurraldea. Eragin bera al dute lurralde batzuetan eta besteetan euskararen alde egiten diren ahaleginek? Ba al dago ebidentziarik pentsatzeko, zona euskaldunagoetan edo erdaldunagoetan, zein zonatan izan den emankorragoa euskararen aldeko lana? Ikergai orokor horretara lehen hurbilpen bat egingo dugu jarraian, gure herrian hiztun berriak sortzeko egin den ahalegin eskergaren inpaktua lurraldearen arabera aztertuz. Beste baterako utziko dugu, ordea, efizientiaren azterketa, hots, euskalduntze-ahaleginean erabilitako baliabideak eta lortutako emaitzak harremanetan jartzea.

Kokapena

Hiztun berriak Euskal Herrian: euskaldun berriak

Soziolinguistika hiztegiaren arabera, euskaldun berria da «lehen hizkuntza erdara izanik, euskaraz ondo ulertzen eta hitz egiten duen pertsona» (UZEI, 2010, 59. or.). Erakunde publiko zein herritarren ahaleginean oinarrituta, hezkuntzan eta helduen euskalduntzean azken hamarraldietan egin den lan eskergari esker, asko handitu da Hego Euskal Herrian, euskaldun berrien multzoa, 13. taulan ikus daitezkeen bezala. Azken datuen arabera ia 300.000 lagunek osatuko lukete ume-garaian etxean euskara jaso ez, eta gaur egun ongi edo nahiko ongi hitz egiteko gai direnen multzoa, 30 urte lehenagoko kopuruak laukoiztuz. Nabarmendu behar da, gainera, euskaldunen multzoak azken 30 urteotan izan duen hazkundera ia erabat zor zaiola hiztun berrien hazkunderari. Euskaldun berrien ugaritzearena funtsezko masa-fenomenoa da azken hamarraldietako Hego Euskal Herrian. Gaur egun euskaldun berriak, Hegoaldeko hiztun guztien % 11,7 eta euskaldunen % 37,6 osatzen dute.

1. taula. Hiztunak, euskaldunak eta euskaldun berriak. 16 urtetik gorako hiztunak, Hego Euskal Herria, 1991–2021.

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
Hiztunak	2.162.181	2.215.703	2.275.436	2.359.417	2.410.637	2.397.982	2.427.363
Euskaldunak	459.389	535.277	579.287	613.988	663.036	700.330	757.857
Euskaldun berriak	65.772	103.343	172.956	197.097	243.144	264.080	284.818
Euskaldun berriak hiztun guztiekiko (%)	3,0	4,7	7,6	8,4	10,1	11,0	11,7
Euskaldun berriak euskal-dunekiko (%)	14,3	19,3	29,9	32,1	36,7	37,7	37,6

Iturria: egileak landua [jatorrizko iturria: Inkesta Soziolinguistikoa].

Aldeko eta aurkako testuinguruak; nagusitasun-eremuak

Soziolinguistikaren oinarrizko printzipiotzat jo daiteke hiztunen portaerak sozialki baldintzatuak direla. Horren barruan, norbere harreman-sareak eta zabalago, testuinguru hurbilak (norbera bizi deneko auzo, herri edo dena delakoak) hiztunaren esperientzian, portaeran eta hautuetan eragingo du. Hiztun berrien bizipenak ikertu dituzten Ortega, Amorrortu, Goirigolzarri eta Urlak (2016), oso modu adierazgarrian, testuinguru *mesedegarri* eta *oztopotzaile* gisa izendatzen dituzte ingurune euskaldunagoak eta erdaldunagoak.

Horregatik, besteak beste, hizkuntza gutxitu batentzat funtsezkoa da hizkuntza hori nagusi izango den espazio geoterritorialak izatea, «*breathing space*» direlakoak (Fishman 1991: 58), *arnasguneak* Mikel Zalbidek Euskal Herrirako egindako egokitzapenean (2019). Zalbideren ekarpena asko laburtuta, hauxe da arnasgunea: hiztunen dentsitate handia duen eta eguneroko jardun arruntean euskara nagusi den ingurune geoterritoriala; horrekin batera, hizkuntzaren belaunez belauneko transmisio naturala bermatzen duena.

Arnasguneen gaia, berez, lurraldean hizkuntza bakoitzak duen nagusitasun-maila jaso dezakeen aldagai zabalago baten barruan ere azter daiteke. Helburu horrekin, euskarak lurralde ezberdinetan duen pisu soziala aztertu ahal izateko, «nagusitasun-eremuak» erabiltzen ditugu. Udalerrriak (eta udalerrietako biztanleria) bertako euskararen erabilera-mailaren arabera sailkatzen ditugu, 2. taulan eta 1. mapan ikus daitekeen bezala². Udalerrri multzo horiek, lehenago

2. Udalerrri bakoitzaren hurbileko erabilera bertako etxeko erabileraren (zentsuetatik) eta kalekoaren (kaleko neurketetatik) batez bestekoarekin kalkulatzen dugu, informazio-hutsuneak dauden kasuan datuak erregresio bidez kalkulatuta (UEMA, 2025).

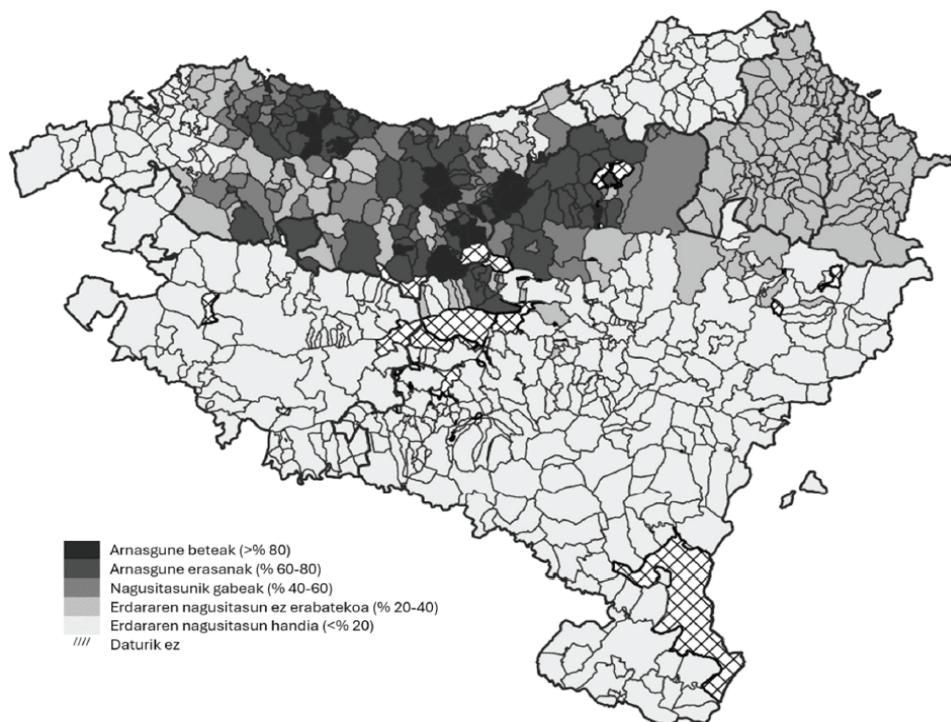
aipatutako logikarekin jarraituta, ekosistema ezberdinak osatzen dituzte ezaugarri eta dinamika soziolinguistikoari dagokionez. Arnasgune beteak dira, euskaldun bizitzeko eta euskara garatzeko baldintza egokienak eskaintzen dituzten inguruneak: beste inon baino errazagoa da euskaraz hitz egitea, euskal gaitasun sendo bat garatzea, hizkuntza transmititzea eta norbere bizitzan euskararen aldeko hizkuntza-bilakaera bat izatea. Beste muturrean, erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuan, zailagoa da euskara garatzea, horietan izaten diren dinamikek erdararen alde (eta euskararen kontra) askoz ere indartsuago egiten baitute. Tarteko eremuek tarteko joera erakusten dute. Bost nagusitasun-eremu horien arabera landuko ditugu ikerketa honetako datuak.

2. taula. Biztanleria, nagusitasun-eremuetan. Hego Euskal Herria, 2021 (Irizpidea: hurbileko erabileraren adierazle sintetikoa, kalekoa eta etxekoa uztartuta).

	Kopurua	%
Arnasgune beteak (euskaraz % 80-100)	9.424	0,3
Arnasgune erasanak (% 60-80)	118.093	4,2
Nagusitasun argirik gabeak (% 40-60)	196.214	7,0
Erdararen nagusitasun ez-erabatekoak (% 20-40)	316.829	11,3
Erdararen nagusitasun handikoak (% 0-20)	2.174.018	77,2
GUZTIRA	2.814.578	100,0

Iturria: UEMA, 2025 [Jatorrizko iturriak: EUSTAT eta NASTATen Biztanleriaren eta etxebizitzaren zentsuak; Soziolinguistika Klusterraren erabileraren neurketen datu-basea, 1989-2023].

1. mapa. Nagusitasun-eremuak. Euskal Herria, 2021 (Irizpidea: hurbileko erabileraren adierazle sintetikoa, kalekoa eta etxekoa uztartuta).



Iturria: UEMA 2025. [Jatorrizko iturriak: EUSTAT eta NASTATen Biztanleriaren eta etxebizitzaren zentsuak; Soziolinguistika Klusterraren erabileraren neurketen datu-basea, 1989-2023.]

Oharra: Ipar Euskal Herriko datuak ez dira udalerrikakoak, herrialdekakoak baizik (Inkesta Soziolinguistikoan oinarrituta).

Esku-hartze egitasmoen inpaktuaren neurketa

Hiztun berrien ugaritzeak nagusitasun-eremu ezberdinetan izandako azken emaitza baloratzeko, politika publikoen eta alor sozialeko esku-hartzeen ebaluazioari buruzko proposamenetan bereizten diren adierazle mota ugarien artean (González, 2021; Hernández et al., 2023) inpaktu-adierazleetan jarriko dugu arreta. Inpaktu-adierazleekin, egindako esku-hartzearen ondorioz gizartean epe luzera gertatu diren aldaketak neurtzen dira; azken helburura zein neurritan hurbildu garen baloratzeko erabiltzen dira. Adibidez, drogen inguruko kanpaina baten ebaluazioa egiterakoan, hainbat alderdi balora daitezke: zenbat jenderengana iritsi den kanpaina hori, zenbat gaztek hartu duten parte programatutako ekintza eta dinamiketan eta abar. Inpaktuaz ari bagara, ordea,

epe luzeko aldaketa sakonagoei erreparatu behar diegu. Adibidearekin jarraituta, drogen kontsumoan egon den balizko jaitsieraren bidez neurtu ahalko dugu kanpainaren inpaktua; edo droga-mendekotasun arazoengatik artatutako gazteen kopuruaren jaitsierekin. Laburbilduz, inpaktu-adierazleek neurtzen dute programak gizartean eta bizitza errealean sortzen duen sakoneko aldaketa iraunkorra, parte-hartzaileengan ez ezik, ingurune osoan eragina duena.

Ikerketa-galdera

Honako galderari erantzuten saiatuko gara gure ikerketan:

Euskaldun berriak bizi diren lurraldearen euskalduntasunaren arabera sailkatuta, nola aldatzen da, zein zentzutan eta zein neurritan, hiztun horiek euskalduntzeak komunitatean eragin duen inpaktua (inpaktu hori erabileraren bidez neurtuta)?

Horrela, bada, inpaktua neurtu nahi dugu, jatorriz erdaldunak ziren hiztunak euskalduntzearen epe luzeko eragina, alegia; eragin hori erabileran oinarrituta neurtuz eta tokiko testuinguru soziolinguistikokoaren arabera aztertuz.

Zergatik jo euskaldun berrien erabilerara beren euskalduntzearen inpaktua aztertzeko? Horixe izan daitekeelako, gure ustez, egindako ahaleginak komunitatean eragin duen aldaketa aztertzeko alderdi nagusia. Euskalduntze-ahaleginaren inpaktua sakon aztertzeak lanketa zabalagoa eskatuko lukeen arren, ez dugu uste oker gabiltzanik, ahalegin horrek luzera bilatzen zuena, neurri handi batean, hiztun berriak hiztun aktibo, euskara erabiliko zuten hiztun, bihurtzea zela esaten badugu. Horregatik, eta jakin arren eragin-multzo konplexuagoak ere badaudela tartean, jatorriz erdaldunak ziren hiztunak euskalduntzeak komunitatean eragindako inpaktua hiztun horiek euskara erabiltzen duten neurrian oinarritzea izan da gure hautua³.

Gure ikerketa-galderari erantzuna bilatzeko, Inkesta Soziolinguistikoko datuetara jo, eta aztertuko dugu zein toki ematen dioten beren jardunean euskarari hizkuntza hori etxetik kanpo ikasi dutenek, eta nola aldatzen den toki hori bizi diren udalerrriaren euskalduntasunaren arabera. Euskalduntasun hori, udalerriko erabileren arabera neurtuko dugu, aurrerago ikusiko dugun bezala.

3. Erabileraren inpaktuaren adierazle gisa erabiltzea eztabaidagarria izan daiteke abiapuntuan oso erdaldunak izan eta azken 40 urteotan euskararen aldeko esku-hartze publikorik bat ere ez (edo oso mugatua) izan duten Nafarroako hegoalde eta erdialdeko ingurunez aritzeko. Horietan, euskara ikaste hutsa, nahiz eta ondoren erabileran ez gauzatu, lorpen gisa har baitaiteke. Hala eta guztiz, Hegoalde mailan euskalduntzearen inpaktua lurraldean neurtzeko erabilerari erreparatzea hautu egokia dela deritzogu.

Iturriak eta metodologia

Iturriak. Iturri nagusia Inkesta Soziolinguistikoa (ISL) izan da. Inkesta hau Euskal Herri osoko 16 urtetik gorako herritarren lagin handi bati egiten zaio bost urtean behin, erakunde publikoen bultzadaz, Eusko Jaurlaritzako Hizkuntza Politikarako Sailburuordetzaren gidaritzapean. Bertan soziolinguistikan oinarritzekoak diren alderdiei buruzko informazio zehatza eskuratzen da. Horrek guztiak bihurtzen du gure lanketarako iturri egokiena. Guk, zehazki, *Euskal Herriko Inkesta Soziolinguistikoa*ren datu-basea (1991-2021) baliatu dugu, bertako mikro-datuak ustiatuta.

Horrez gain, UEMAren *Erabilera hurbilaren kalkulua udalerrika* erabili dugu nagusitasun-eremuak finkatzeko garaian (UEMA, 2025). Lan horrek, era berean, honako iturrietatik edan zuen: EUSTAT eta NASTATen *Biztanleriaren eta etxebizitzaren zentsuak* eta *Soziolinguistika Klusterraren erabileraren neurketen datu-basea*, 1989-2023 (HEKN). Horien artean, eta arnasguneetarako azpilagin egokiagoak ziurtatze aldera, kaleko erabileraren araberrako eremuak landu ditugu gure ustiaketa lantzeko.

Ikertutako unibertsoa; adin-, lurralde- eta denbora-mugaketa. Hegoaldean bizi diren 16 urtetik gorako euskaldun berriek osatzen dute gure ikerketa-unibertsoa:

- Ikerketaren lurralde-eremua Hegoaldera mugatu dugu, Iparraldean udalerrri-mailako informaziorik ez dugunez, landuko dugun ustiaketa-eredua ezin delako gaur-gaurkoz garatu.
- Adin-taldea 16 urtetik gorakoen multzoak osatuko du, ISLn multzo horri buruzko informazioa biltzen delako.
- Denborari dagokionez, lehen ahalegin batean saiatu gara daturik berrienak lantzen, 2021ekoak, alegia. Ikusi dugu, ordea, urte horretako nagusitasun-eremuetarako euskaldun berrien azpilaginen neurriak txikiegiak zirela egin nahi genuen ikerketa egiteko. Lagin adierazgarriagoak bilatuz, 1996-2021 datu metatuetara jo dugu⁴. Urtekako datuei begiratuta, ez dugu uste 25 urteetako datu metatuekin lan egiteak askorik distortsionatuko zituenik emaitzak; hortaz, gaur egungo joerak atzemateko baliogarritzat joko ditugu.

4. Inkesta Soziolinguistikoa 1991. urtean egin zen lehen aldiz. Urte horretako datuak, ordea, ez ditugu gure lanketan txertatu, urte horretako erabilerari buruzko datuen eta ondorengo urteei buruzkoen erabateko alderagarritasuna ezin zelako bermatu landu ditugun adierazleetan.

Horiek horrela, honela defini dezakegu ustiaketa honetan landu dugun unibertsoa: 1996-2021 tartean Hegoaldean bizi (izan) diren eta lehen hizkuntza gisa etxean euskararik jaso ez zuten hiztun euskaldunak. Bestela esanda, epealdi horretako 16 urtetik gorako euskaldun berriek osatzen dute gure ikerketa-unibertsoa.

Lagina. goiko definizioa betetzen duten 7.062 kasu aurkitu ditugu ISLren datu-basean. Berez, oinarri oso egokia da azterketa orokor bat egiteko ($\pm 1,2$ ko akats-tarte orokorra eratortzen da kopuru horretatik, % 95eko konfiantza-mailan eta $p = q = \% 50$ denerako), baina ikusiko dugun bezala, laginen neurria dezente txikitzen da nagusitasun-eremu batzuetan, arnasmune erasanean eta, batez ere, beteetan. Kasu horietan azpilaginak komeni baino txikiagoak dira; dena den, aztergai dugun joera orokorra antzemateko balekoak direla deritzogu. Edozelan ere, azpilaginen neurriak tauletan aurkeztuko ditugu.

Ustiaketan landutako aldagaiak:

Euskaldun berriak hartu, eta honako bi aldagaien arteko harremana aztertuko dugu, taula gurutzatuen eta batez bestekoen bidez:

- Mendeko aldagai gisa, hiztunen aurrez aurreko harremanetako erabilera landuko dugu. Adierazle hau inkesta soziolinguistikoan biltzen diren hainbat erabilera xehe uztartuz sortzen dugu (familia-girokoa, lagunartekoa, lankideekikoa eta abar), erabilera xehe bakoitzari egunerokoan izan dezakeen garrantziaren arabera pisua emanez. Adierazle sintetikoa da, eta hiztun bakoitzaren jardunean euskarak hartzen duen pisua adierazten du % baten bidez (adierazle horren eraikuntza zehatz ikusteko: Iurrebaso, 2024: 530).
- Aldagai aske gisa, hiztunak bizi direneko nagusitasun-eremuak landuko ditugu, hiztunak bizi direneko udalerriaren euskalduntasunaren arabera bost multzo nagusitan sailkatuz, irizpide gisa kaleko erabilera hartuta.

Inpaktuaren neurketa, hots, hiztun berriek euskararen erabilerari egiten dioten ekarpenaren kalkulua, bi modutan egingo dugu, aurrez aurreko harremanetako erabileraren adierazlea bi eratara landuz:

- Batetik, nagusiki euskaraz bizi diren hiztunen garrantziaz jakitun (Zalbide, 2016) eremu batzuetako eta besteetako euskaldun berrien artean nagusiki euskaraz bizi direnen ehunekoak kalkulatuko ditugu (euren jardunaren % 60tik gora euskaraz egiten dutenena zehazki).

- Bestetik, euskara gutxiago erabiltzen duten hiztunen ekarpenak ere aintzat hartzeko, euskaldun berri guztiek egiten duten euskararen batez besteko erabilera kalkulatuko dugu, euren erantzun aitortuetan oinarrituta, lehenik; eta erantzun aitortuetan egon ohi den alboratzea saihesteko egindako doiketa baten bidez, ondoren.

Datuen lanketa eta irakurketa

Inpaktuaren neurketa, nagusiki euskaraz bizi diren hiztunak aintzat hartuta

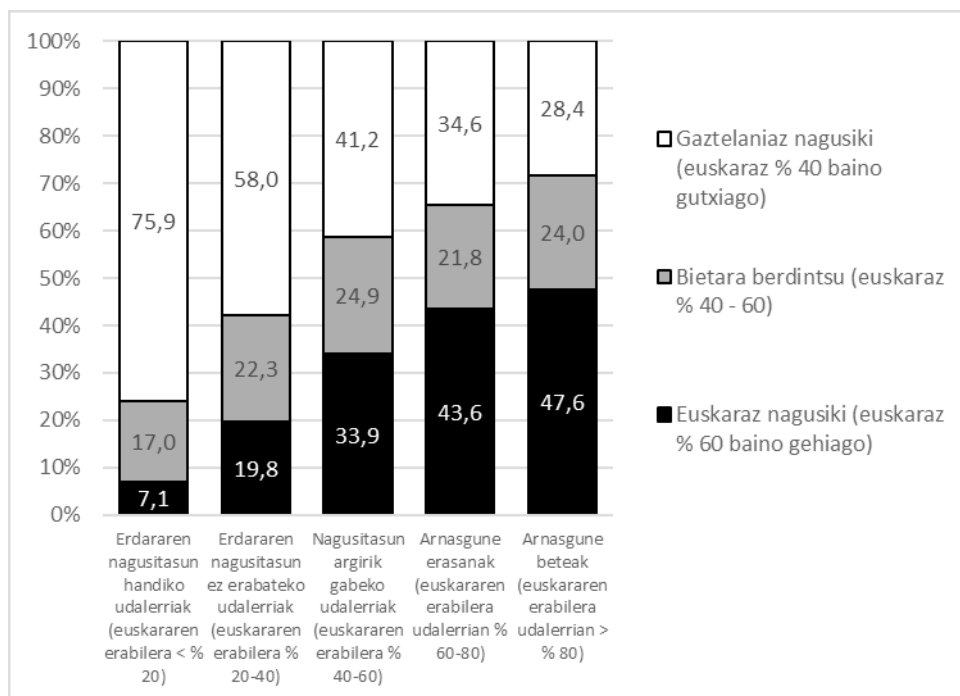
3. taulan eta 1. grafikoan, Hegoaldeko euskaldun berrien hizkuntzen erabileraren banaketa erakusten da, beren bizilekuaren arabera (udalerri euskaldunagoa edo erdaldunagoa, nagusitasun-eremuak aintzat hartuta). Euskaldun berri guztiei buruzko datu orokorrak hartuta, euskara etxetik kanpo ikasi duten hiztunek, nabarmen gehiago erabili izan dute 1996-2021 aldian euren egunerokoan erdara euskara baino: % 10,6k euskara erdara baino gehiago erabili izan du, eta % 71,4k erdara euskara baino gehiago (gainerako % 18,0k euskara-gaztelania bi hizkuntzak maila bertsuan erabili izan dituzte).

Kopuru horiek, ordea, eta gure ikergaiari zuzenean helduz, nabarmen aldatzen dira hiztun horiek bizi diren ingurunearen arabera. Muturretara joz, erdara oso nagusi den eremuetan euskaldun berrien % 7,1ek bakarrik erabiltzen du euskara gaztelania baino gehiago; kopuru hori, ordea, % 47,6raino igotzen da arnasgune beteetan, testuinguruan euskara oso nagusi den eremuetan. Bi mutur horien artean, hurrenkera argia erakusten dute datuek: zenbat eta testuinguru euskaldunagoa, orduan eta gehiago dira nagusiki euskaraz bizi diren euskaldun berriak. Bereziki aipagarria iruditzen zaigu honako datua: arnasgune bete zein erasanetan, euskaldun berri gehiago dira euren eguneroko hizkuntza nagusi euskara dutenak gaztelania dutenak baino.

3. taula. Hizkuntzen erabilera aurrez aurreko harremanetan, bizi diren nagusitasun-
eremuen arabera. 16 urtetik gorako hiztun euskaldun berriak, Hegoaldea, 1996-2021
(datu metatuak).

	Hiztunen bizilekua, nagusitasun-eremutan					
	Erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerriak (euskararen erabilera <% 20)	Erdararen nagusitasun ez eraba-teko udalerriak (euskararen erabilera % 20-40)	Nagusitasun argirik gabeko udalerriak (euskararen erabilera % 40-60)	Arnasgune erasanak (euskararen erabilera % 60-80)	Arnasgune beteak (euskararen erabilera udalerrian >% 80)	
GUZTIAK						
Gaztelaniaz nagusiki (euskaraz % 40 baino gutxiago)	71,4	75,9	58,0	41,2	34,6	28,4
Bietara berdintsu (euskaraz % 40-60)	18,0	17,0	22,3	24,9	21,8	24,0
Euskaraz nagusiki (euskaraz % 60 baino gehiago)	10,6	7,1	19,8	33,9	43,6	47,6
GUZTIAK	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
n (kasu kopurua)	7.062	6.224	410	264	105	59

Iturria: egileak landua [jatorrizko iturria: ISL].



1. grafikoa. Erabilera aurrez aurreko harremanetan, bizi diren nagusitasun-eremuen arabera. 16 urtetik gorako hiztun euskaldun berriak, Hegoaldea, 1996-2021 (datu metatuak).

Iturria: egileak landua [jatorrizko iturria: ISL].

Inpaktuaren neurketa, batez besteko erabileran oinarrituta

4. taulako a zutabean, hiztun berrien batez besteko erabilera aitortua erakusten da, nagusitasun-eremuka. Emaitez aipatu berri dugun logika bera erakusten dute: erdara oso nagusi den eremuetan euskarak % 25,3ko batez besteko tokia betetzen du euskaldun berrien jardunean; kopuru hori % 55,6raino igotzen da arnasguneetan; tarteko eremuetan, tarteko balioak aurkitzen ditugu. Datuok, hortaz, aurrekoen logika bera erakusten dute argi; baina oraingoan lurraldearen eta erabilera-mailaren arteko harremanean ikusten diren aldeak «nagusiki euskaraz» aritzen direnen kopuruetan baino nabarmen apalagoak izan dira.

4. taula. Euskaldun berrien euskararen batez besteko erabilera aurrez aurreko harremanetan, erantzun aitortuetan oinarrituta; doitze-koefiziente baten kalkulua hitzun guztien erabilera aitortua eta behatua harremanetan jarrita; doitze-koefizientea aplikatuta euskaldun berrien batez besteko erabileraren kalkulua. Hegoaldea nagusitasun-eremuka, 1996-2021 (datu metatuak).

Hitzun guztiei buruzko datuetan oinarrituta, doitze-koefizientearen kalkulua							
Euskaldun berrien euskararen batez besteko erabilera (%) aurrez aurreko harremanetan (ISL 2021, 16 urtetik gorakoak, erantzun aitortuak) <i>a</i>	Euskaldunen euskararen batez besteko erabilera (%) aurrez aurreko harremanetan (ISL 2021, 16 urtetik gorakoak, erantzun aitortuak) <i>b</i>	Euskaldunen proportzioa hitzun guztiekiko (ISL 2021, 16 urtetik gorakoak) <i>c</i>	Hitzun guztien euskararen batez besteko erabilera (%) aurrez aurreko harremanetan (ISL 2021, 16 urtetik gorakoak) <i>d = b*c/100</i>	Kaleko erabilera behatua (HEKN 2021, 2 urtetik gorako hitzunak) <i>e</i>	Doitze-koefizientea (aitortutik behatua dagoen alde: aitortua 1 bada, zenbat den behatua) <i>f = e/d</i>	Euskaldun berrien batez besteko erabilera (%) aurrez aurreko harremanetan, 2021 (erantzun aitortuei doitze-koefizientea aplikatuta) <i>g = f*e</i>	
Erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerriak (euskararen erabilera <% 20)	25,3	41,1	23,6	9,7	5,2	0,54	13,5
Erdararen nagusitasun ez erabateko udalerriak (euskararen erabilera % 20-40)	36,6	69,2	56,6	39,1	29,3	0,75	27,4
Nagusitasun argirik gabeko udalerriak (euskararen erabilera % 40-60)	46,7	77,6	71,5	55,5	49,5	0,89	41,7
Arnasgune erasanak (euskararen erabilera % 60-80)	53,1	84,4	76,2	64,3	69,9	1,09	57,8
Arnasgune beteak (euskararen erabilera >% 80)	55,6	89,6	90,1	80,7	86,8	1,08	59,8

Iturria: egileak landua [jatorrizko iturriak: ISL eta HEKN].

3. taulako datuek eta 4. taulako a zutabekoek zein baliozkotasun⁵ izan dezakete hiztunen *benetako* erabilera-ohiturak kuantifikatzeko garaian? Ez da azkar-azkar erantzuteko moduko galdera, eta goazen astiro. Hasteko, oinarritzko gogoeta bat: kopuru horiek hiztunen lagin batek inkesta bati emandako erantzun aitortuetan oinarritzen dira, ez dira zuzenean hiztun horien portaeren zenbaketa baten emaitza. Zein puntutan etorriko dira bat elkarrizketatuen portaerak eta elkarrizketatuek beren portaerei buruz inkestan emandako erantzunak? Inkesta-tekniketan sarri gertatzen den bezala, uste izatekoa da portaera errealek eta inkestako erantzunek lotura argia izango dutela, baina ez direla % 100ean bat etorriko; alboratze bat egongo baita egiten dela esaten denaren eta *benetan* egiten denaren artean. Alde horri buruz aspalditik hitz egin izan da nazioarteko soziolinguistikari buruzko literatura metodologikoan (Dell'Aquila eta Iannàccaro, 2019: 530; Fasold, 1996: 186; Vila eta Sorolla, 2009: 79).

Oro har, inkestako erantzunetan hizkuntza gutxituaren erabilera *puzteko* edo *hanpatzeko* joera egongo da hizkuntza gutxituarekiko jarrera positiboa nagusitzen den testuinguruetan eta erabilera hori dena baino txikiagoa azaltzeko joera hizkuntzarekiko jarrera negatiboa nagusi denean. Logika orokor horren baitan, Euskal Herrian agerikoa da erabilerari buruzko erantzun aitortuetan oinarritutako datuek «hobetu» egiten dituztela behaketa bidez jaso izan diren erabilerari buruzko datuak (Iurrebaso, 2012). Har ditzagun, adibidez, 2021eko erabilerari buruzko bi datu: 2021. urtean Euskal Herri osoan behaketa bidez egindako neurketan, % 12,6koa⁶ izan zen euskararen erabilera-tasa (Altuna *et al.*, 2022: 17); urte bereko inkesta soziolinguistikokoan jasotako erantzun aitortuen arabera, berriz, % 16,6koa izan zen euskararen batez besteko erabilera 16 urtetik gorako hiztunen artean. Alde ohargarria dago, hortaz, inkestetan jasotzen den informazioaren eta behaketa batek ematen dituen emaitzen artean. Bi kopuru horien arteko aldean bestelako alderdiek ere eragiten dute, ez gara orain horretan luzatuko; baina erabilitako teknika (inkesta batean, behaketa bestean) funtsezko alderdia da bi kopuru horien arteko aldeak azaltzeko. Ez dago esan beharrik, hiztunen portaera errealak gertuago egongo direla behaketa-teknikek ematen dituzten balioetatik erantzun aitortuetan oinarritzen diren inkestetako datuetatik baino.

5. Baliozkotasunak, ikertzaileak benetan neurtu nahi duena neurtzea lortzen ote duen erakusten du: baliozkotasuna, izan ere, «irudikatzen saiatzen den egoeraz egiazki irudikatzen duen maila gisa defini dezakegu» (Etxeberria Murgiondo, 2011, 25. or.).

6. Kale-neurketetako datua hiztun guztiei dagokie; haurren erabilera ere barnebiltzen du hortaz. 15 urtetik gorako hiztunen erabilerara mugatuko bagina kopurua apur bat baxuagoa izango litzateke, eta inkesta soziolinguistikoko datu aitortuarekiko aldeak, apur bat handiagoa.

Inkestako datu aitortuek berez dakarten alboratze hori, gainera, ez da gizarteko alor guztietan homogeneoa izaten, gaiari buruzko metodologia-literaturan esan ohi zaigun bezala: arrazoi ezberdinak tarteko, alor batzuetako elkarrizketatuek beren *benetako* portaerak gehiago *hanpatzeko* joera izan ohi dute beste alor batzuetakoek baino (De Rosselló eta Ginebra, 2014, 257. or.; Fasold, 1996, 187. or.; Ó Riagáin, 2018, 40. or.). Ideia horri tiraka, hona hemen gure datuak interpretatzerakoan garrantzitsuak izan daitezkeen bi ideia: batetik, uste izatekoa da alboratzeak handiagoak direla euskara gutxitan edo noizbehinka erabiltzen duten elkarrizketatuen artean, euskara eguneroko hizkuntza nagusi dutenen artean baino. Hortaz, uste izatekoa da nagusiki euskaraz aritzen direla dioten ehunekoen 3. taulako balioek alboratze txikiagoa izango dutela errealitatearekiko, hiztun guztien euskararen batez besteko erabilera jasotzen duten 4. taulako a zutabeko datuek baino.

Bestetik, pentsatzekoa da lurraldearen euskalduntasun-mailak ere zerikusia izango duela erantzunak gehiago edo gutxiago *hanpatzeko* joerarekin. Horrela, metodologia-literaturak dioenari jarraikiz, uste izatekoa da aitortutako erantzunetan oinarritutako kalkuluak gehiago *hanpatuko* dituztela erabileraren emaitzak ingurune erdaldunagoetan ingurune euskaldunagoetan baino (Iurrebaso, 2024, 257. or.). Guk eskura ditugun datuek ere ideia hori berriro baieztatzen garamatzate (hiztun guztiei buruzko datuak dira orain, ez euskaldun berriei buruzkoak soilik). 4. taulako d eta e zutabeetan ikus daitekeen bezala, erantzun aitortuetan oinarritutako batez besteko erabileraren eta behaketa bidez jasotakoaren arteko desoreka aldatu egiten da ingurunearen arabera: ingurune erdaldunagoetan handiagoa da *hanpatze* hori euskaldunagoetan baino⁷.

Joera ezberdindu hori ezagututa, 4. taulan *hanpatze* horren eragina saihesteko kalkulu batzuk egin ditugu. Horrela, hiztun guztien artean, aitortutako batez besteko erabileraren eta erabilera behatuaren artean dagoen desorekarekin doitze-koefiziente bat kalkulatu dugu f zutabearen nagusitasun-eremu bakoitzerako. Ondoren, koefiziente hori a zutabeko euskaldun berrien batez besteko erabilera aitortuaren ehunekoari aplikatuta, datu doituak sortu ditugu g zutabearen. Hanpatzearen eragina neutralizatuta sortutako datu horiek hurbilpen egokiagoa izango dira eremu batzuetan eta besteetan euskaldun berriek egiten duten erabileraren berri izateko, zuzenean erantzun aitortuetan oinarritutakoak baino; g zutabeko datuak hobetsiko ditugu, beraz, euskaldun berrien euskararen batez besteko erabilera zertan egon daitekeen kuantifikatzeko. Datu horien arabera erdara oso nagusi den udalerrietako euskaldun berriek % 13,5ean darabilte

7. Are gehiago, arnaguneetan apur bat handiagoa da erabilera behatuak euskarari ematen dion tokia erantzun aitortuek ematen diotena baino.

euskara batez beste euren aurrez aurreko harremanetan; kopuru hori % 59,8raino iristen da arnasgune beteetan. Tarteko eremuetan, tarteko balioak hartzen ditu batez besteko erabilerak. Aipagarria da emaitza hauen arabera arnasguneetako euskaldun berriek erdarari baino toki handiagoa ematen diotela euskarari euren eguneroko jardunean.

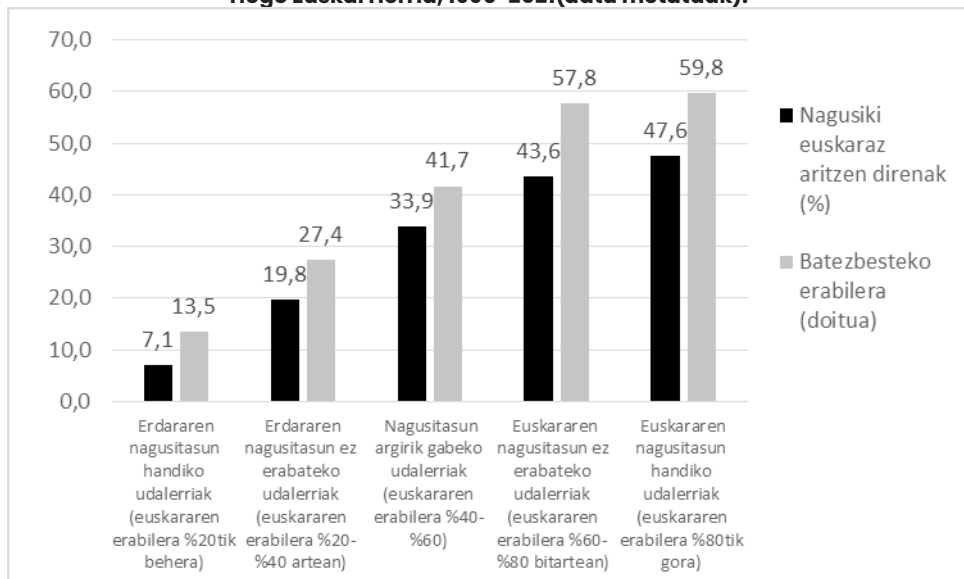
Euskaldun berrien inpaktua laburtuz

Atal honekin amaitzeko, 9. grafikoan euskaldun berrien erabilerari buruzko datu nagusiak laburtu ditugu. Bertan ikus daitekeenez, erabilera errotik aldatzen da hiztun hori bizi deneko udalerriaren euskalduntasuna aintzat hartuta. Laburtuz:

- Oro har, euskaldun berrien % 7,1 bihurtu da nagusiki euskara darabilen hiztun erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerrietan; kopuru hori, % 47,6ra igotzen da arnasgune beteetan. Tarteko eremuek bi mutur horien arteko tarteko balioak hartzen dituzte.
- Batez besteko erabilerak aztertuta (eta erantzun aitortuek izan dezaketen alboratzea zuzenduta), euskaldun berrien jardunaren % 13,5 da euskaraz erdararen nagusitasun handiko eremuetan. Kopuru hori % 59,8ra igotzen da arnasgune beteetan. Adierazle honetan ere, tarteko eremuek tarteko balioak hartzen dituzte.

2. grafikoa. Euskaldun berrien artean zenbat bizi diren nagusiki euskaraz eta haien batez besteko euskararen erabilera, nagusitasun eremuen arabera.

Hego Euskal Herria, 1996-2021(datu metatuak).



Iturria: egileak landua [jatorrizko iturria: ISL].

Inpaktuari dagokionez, hortaz, argia da ondorioa: jatorriz erdaldunak ziren hiztunak euskalduntzeak erabileran duen inpaktua aldatu egiten da ingurune soziolinguistikoaren arabera. Zenbat eta ingurune euskaldunagoa, orduan eta inpaktu handiagoa. Izan ere, ingurune euskaldunagoetako euskaldun berriek askoz ere ekarpen handiagoa egiten diote euskararen erabilerari batez beste, ingurune erdaldunagoetakoek baino. Muturretara joz, arnasmune bateko euskaldun berri batek euskararen erabilerari egiten dion ekarpena, batez beste, ingurune oso erdaldun batekoak egiten diona baino bost edo sei⁸ aldiz handiagoa da.

Ondorioak

Euskalduntzearen inpaktu aldakorra, testuinguru soziolinguistikoaren arabera

Euskaldun berriek euskara gehiago erabiltzen dute bizi diren udalerria zenbat eta euskaldunagoa izan. Horregatik, jatorriz erdaldunak ziren hiztunak euskalduntzeko egindako ahaleginak inpaktu ezberdina izan du nagusitasun-eremuen arabera: igo egiten da nabarmen euskaldun berriak bizi direneko lurraldearen euskalduntasuna igo ahala. Zonarik euskaldunenetan lortutako eragina, zona erdaldunenetan lortutakoa baino 5-6 aldiz handiagoa da euskalduntutako pertsonako. Horixe gure ikerketaren ondorio nagusia.

Inpaktu aldakorra zergatik ote?

Zergatik ote 5-6 aldiz handiagoa inguru euskaldunagoetako euskaldun berrien erabilera (eta inpaktua) gune erdaldunenetakoa baino? zein logika soziolinguistikok azaltzen ditu batzuen eta besteen arteko aldeak? Testuinguruak zuzenean baldintzatzen ditu hiztun batzuen eta besteen erabilera-maila ulertzeko funtsezkoak diren hainbat alderdi. Hasteko, ingurune euskaldunagoetan, hiztun berriak euskara erabiltzeko aukera gehiago izango ditu ingurune erdaldunduagoetan bizi denak baino. Aukera ez ezik, euskara erabiltzearen aldeko bultzada sentituko du sarri asko arnasmuneetako euskaldun berriak, erdara nagusi den eremuetan, arau soziala gatzelania erabiltzearen aldekoa den bitartetan. Zentzu berean, mintzakide elebidunen gaitasun erlatiboak (euskaraz edo erdaraz egiten duten errazago) ere euskara erabiltzearen alde eragingo du zona euskaldunagoetan eta erdararen alde zona erdaldunagoetan. Horrek guztiak zeharo baldintzatzen ditu eremu batzuetako eta besteetako hiztun berrien praktikak. Erabileraren erabileraz, gainera, zona euskaldunagoetako hiztun berriak euskal gaitasun

8. Borobildu egin ditugu muturreko eremuen arteko ratioak; hemen kopuru zehatzak: euskaraz nagusiki bizi direnak % 7,1 dira erdara oso nagusi den eremuetan eta % 47,6 arnasmune beteetan (ratioa = $47,6 / 7,1 = 6,7$). Euskararen batez besteko erabilera doituia % 13,5ekoa da erdara oso nagusi den eremuetako euskaldun berrien artean eta % 59,8koa arnasmune beteetakoetan (ratioa = $59,8 / 13,5 = 4,4$).

sendoagoa garatuko du batez beste ingurune erdaldunagokoak baino, eta horrek berak ere bultzatu egingo du gehiago erabiltzera; zona erdaldunagoetako euskaldun berri asko, ordea, erabilerarako urratsa eman ezinda geldituko dira, testuinguru oztopatzailean trabatuta, eskuratutako gaitasuna baliatu eta garatu ezinda.

Hipotesi bat efizientziaren azterketaren zain

Sarreran aipatu dugu erronka dugula indarberritzean egiten diren ahaleginen inpaktuan eta efizientzian eragiten duten ardatzak detektatzen. Ikerlan honetan lurraldearen araberrako inpaktuaren azterketara mugatu gara. Inpaktua ez ezik, efizientzia ere neurtuko bagenu, hots, euskaldun berri horiek «ekoizteko» egindako ahalegina eta jarritako bitartekoak ere ekuazioan sartuko bagenitu, eta ahalegin hori sortutako inpaktuarekin harremanetan jarri, uste izatekoa da eremuen arteko aldea inpaktuan ikusitako 5-6ko ratioa baino are handiagoa izango litzatekeela. Izan ere, pentsatzekoa da euskara ikasteko prozesu bera ere azkarragoa-errazagoa izango dela udalerrri euskaldunetan gainerakoetan baino. Ondorioz, egindako ahalegina eta erabileran izandako inpaktua harremanetan jarrita 5-6ko ratio hori aise gaudituko litzatekeelakoan gaude. Ideia hori, dena den, datuekin noiz landuko zain, hipotesi gisa planteatuko dugu oraingoz.

Orokortzeko modukoa ote inpaktu ezberdinduaren logika?

Hego Euskal Herrian hizkuntza gutxituaren ahaleginean inpaktu-maila lurraldean hizkuntza gutxituak duen nagusitasunarekin lotzen duen joera hau orokortu ote daiteke beste hizkuntza gutxituen kasura? Ez dugu galdera horri zorrotz erantzuteko oinarri askirik. Hala ere, hemen gure iritzia: Hego Euskal Herrian atzemandako inpaktu aldakor hori, orokorrak diren prozesu eta logika soziolinguistikoen ondorioz ematen denez, uste izatekoa da gainerako hizkuntza gutxituetan ere fenomeno bera aurkituko dugula. Espero dezagun etorkizuneko ikerketek argia ekarriko dutela gai hauei buruz.

Zergatik eragin lurralde ikuspegiz

Lurralde-ikerketatik indarberritze-politiketara: baratze emankorrenen bila, politiken eragina handitzea helburu

Ikerketaren ondorio nagusia izan da inpaktu ezberdina izan duela euskalduntze-ahaleginak lurraldean; lurralde euskaldunagoetan euskara ikasi dutenek gehiago erabiltzen dutela euskara, lurralde erdaldunagoetan ikasi dutenek baino. Ondorioz, batez beste inpaktu positibo handiagoa izan du lurralde euskaldunagoetan euskaldunetako euskaldun berriak lurralde

erdaldunagoetakoak baino⁹. Efizientziari buruzko azterketaren zain, baina erratzeko arrisku handirik gabe, esan dezakegu lurralde euskaldunagoetan egindako ahaleginak nabarmen emankorragoak izan direla lurralde erdaldunagoetan egindakoak baino. Horiek horrela, hona erantzun beharreko funtsezko galdera praktikoa: dinamika hori kontuan hartu behar ote da politika publikoen eta eragile sozialen ahaleginak non eta nola bideratu erabakitzerakoan, edo politika horiek errealitate hori aintzat hartu gabe lantzea ote da egokiagoa?

Metafora bat: gosetea eta elikagai-gabezia larria bizi dute herrialde batean. Baratzte ezberdinak dituzte euren lurretan, eta azken uztetan frogatu dute horietako batzuetan ereindako haziak fruitu nabarmen ugariagoa eman dutela besteetan ereindakoek baino. Horiek horrela, zer egin datorren urteari begira? Baratza guztietan haziak proportzionalki banatu edo sail emankorragoetan hazi gehiago erein? Uste dugu balizko egoera horretan inor gutxik jarriko lukeela auzitan zein den erabaki egokia: haziak (beti mugatuak) baratze emankorragoetan gehiago ereinda, uzta orokor handiagoa ekarriko lieke guztietan haziak berdintsu banatuta baino.

Gure egoerak badu antzekotasunik metaforakoarekin. Gure ustez, zentzu betea du minorizazio gorrian dagoen hizkuntza-komunitateak bere baratze emankorrenetan ahaleginak biderkatzeak. Ahalegin orokor gutxiagorekin, gehiago aurreratu ahal izatea ez da garrantzirik gabeko argudioa: euskarak adierazle nagusietan egun dituen balio baxuetatik igo beharra dauka, igoera hori azkarren nola egin funtsezko auzia da.

Horrek lurralde-estrategia baten premia jartzen du mahai gainean. Ez da horrelako estrategia bat justifikatzeko argudio bakarra.

Lurraldean ematen den dinamika soziolinguistikoa aintzat hartzearen onurak

Ezaugarri soziolinguistiko ezberdinak dituzten eta elkarreraginean dauden lurralde-eremu interkonektatuen batura da egungo Euskal Herria. Lurralde-eremu euskaldunagoek euskalduntzearen aldeko eragina daukate gainerakoetan;

9. Irakurketa hau nahasgarria gertatuko zaio baten bati, beste toki batzuetan esan izan dugunarekiko kontraesankorra eman dezakeelako. Hots, beste toki batzuetan azaldu izan dugu zonarik euskaldunenetan egin duela euskarak batez ere atzera, zona horiek ahuldu direla gehien. Lan honetan, berriz, azaldu dugu euskaldun berriek inpaktu positibo handiagoa izan dutela batez beste ingurune euskaldunagoetan. Nola uztartzen dira bi ikuspegiak? Inpaktuak ingurune euskaldunen barne-dinamikarekin du zerikusia: zona euskaldunaren berezko ezaugarriek eraginda, euskaldun berriek gehiago erabiltzen dute euskara eremu hauetan. Zona euskaldunen bilakaera ulertzeko, ordea, barne-dinamikaz gain kanpo-dinamika ere aintzat hartu behar da, biztanleria-fluxuen eragina zehazki. Fluxu horiek erabakigarriak izan dira eremu euskaldunen ahultzean. Laburtuz, nahiz eta barneko dinamikak euskararen alde eragin, eta horrek euskaldun berrien praktikan isla argia izan, dinamika orokorrak ingurune euskaldunen ahultzea eragin du.

lurralde erdaldunagoek, erdararen aldekoa (Basurto eta Lurrebaso, 2025). Eragin hori indartsua da kuantitatiboki. Berez, lurralde mota bakoitzak duen pisuaren ondorioz (baita botere-egitura orokorren ondorioz ere) handiagoa da eremu erdaldunagoen eragin «erdaltzalea» eremu euskaldunagoen euskara indartzearen aldeko eragina baino. Edozelan ere, aldebikoa da eragina.

Onura argiak ekarriko lituzke hizkuntza-politikak elkarerreragin horren ezagutza zehatzetik abiatzeak. Aldeko korronteak (lurralde euskaldunagoek eragiten duten gainerakoen «euskalduntzea») gehiago aprobetxatzeko eta ahal den neurrian indartzeko bitartekoak landuz; eta kontrako korronteen eragina ahultzea bilatuz. Azken batean, eraginkorragoa izango da gure ahalegina esku-hartze politikak lurraldeen arteko elkarerreraginaren ezagutzaren gainean eraikita, dinamika horien aurrean ezikusiarrena eginda baino.

Arnasguneak babestea lehentasun

Zergatien artean azken puntuan aurkeztuko dugun arren, aurrekoa bezain garrantzitsua bada, gutxienez, teoria soziolinguistikoaren alorretik hizkuntza gutxitu batentzat arnasguneek duten garrantziaz esaten zaiguna (Fishman, 1991; Giollagáin *et al.*, 2025; Zalbide, 2019): dentsitate handiko lurguneari eustea eta, ahal bada, hedatzea, hil ala bizikoa da hiztun-komunitate gutxituak aurrera egingo badu. Ez gara luzatuko hemen hori argudiatzen. Ezta azken mende luzean eta bereziki azken hogeita bost urteotan gertatzen ari den ingurune hauen suntsipen prozesuaren indarra gogoratzen ere (Lurrebaso eta Goikoetxea, 2025). Eta ezta eragin ezean etorkizun hurbilean espazio hauek bizi dezaketen erabateko desagertzea deskribatzen ere (Siadeco, 2025).

Arnasguneak galduz gero, euskararen egoera orokorrak okerrera egingo luke nabarmen; besteak beste, lurralde trinkoenaren galerak eskutik ekarriko lukeelako funtsezko beste zenbait aldagaietan ere atzera egitea, hala nola nagusitasunezko hiztunen multzoan, erabilera trinkoa duten hiztunen multzoan eta transmisio betea jasotzen duten haurren multzoan. Lurgune euskaldunena ahultzeak atzerakada argia ekarriko luke Euskal Herriko egoera soziolinguistiko orokorrean, euskara heriotzatik gertu dauden komunitateetara gehiago hurbilduz. Lehen mailako arrazoia da honakoa lurralde-estrategia bat abian jartzeko.

Hiriburuen rolari buruz

Argipen bat aurrera segi baino lehen. Hiriburu eta hiri-inguru populatueneke bete al dezakete indarberritze-prozesuan motor- edo aitzindaritzarolik? Izan al daitezke eremu hauek gainerakoen euskalduntasuna elikatze bitarteko nagusi eta hizkuntza-politika aurreratuagoetan bide-erakusle? Ez dirudi horretarako

baldintza egokienak dituztenik. Lehenik eta behin, eremu horietan euskarak bizi duen minorizazio-maila bereziki larriagatik. Hegoaldeko lau hiriburuetan euskarak maila apala edo oso apala du¹⁰. Gure historia soziolinguistiko hurbilak, gainera, erakutsi digu azken hamarraldietan eremu horietan egindako ahalegin handiak fruitu esanguratsuak ekarri dituela ezagutzen, baina adierazle sendoagoetara joz gero aurrerapena oso apala izan dela. Adibidez, Iruñea, Gasteiz eta Bilbon kaleko erabileraren igoera puntu bat edo biren bueltan ibili da hogeita hamar urteko ibilbidean. Ez da harritzekoa: ingurune hain erdaldunduetan bereziki zaila da euskalduntzean aurrera egitea, inguru demolinguistiko eta sozialak gogor bultzatzen baitu erdalduntzearen alde. Aurrera begira, egoera erraztuko ez duten faktore berriagoak indartzen ari dira gainera: aurrez aurreko harremanen ahultzea bereziki indartsua da ingurune hauetan, nazioarteko fluxu demografikoek bereziki eragiten diete hiriburuei eta inguruneei, higiezin merkatuaren logikak belaunaldi berriak (euskaldunagoak) kanporatzen ditu hiriburuetatik... Horiek horrela, nekez jokatu dute hiriburuak indarberritzearen motor demolinguistiko praktikoaren papera. Alderantziz, eremu horiek, Bilbo eta Donostiaren kasuan bereziki, gaur egun erdara irradiatzen dute euskaldunagoa den ingurune hurbilera, fluxu demografikoen eta lan- zein aisia-arloko mugikortasunaren bidez, besteak beste. Horrela bada, errealismotik at legoke hiriburuei motor- edo aitzindaritzapapera esleitzea; inork betetzekotan, eremu euskaldunenak soilik bete lezake paper hori.

Lurralde ezberdinetan eragiteari buruzko gogoetak, ordea, berariaz landu beharko luke zein toki bete behar duten herrialdeetako hiriburuak. Eskualde-mailan topatu daitezkeen denetariko dinamikak aztertzea eta lantzea ere interesgarria litzateke, eskualde-buruen paperean eta eraginean arreta berezia jarritz. Aldaketa soziokulturaletan hiriburuak jokatu ohi duten lidergo-rola kontuan hartuta, botere politiko-ekonomiko-kultural-sinbolikoaren egoitza gisa duten garrantzia ezagututa, eta askotan ingurune zabalagoko herritarrak biltzen dituzten masa-ekitaldiak bertan egiten direla kontuan hartuta, garrantzitsua da hiriburuetan euskarak duen estatua bermatzea. Adibidez, hiriburuetan dauden eta lurralde osoko euskaldunentzako espazio erreferentzialak direnak zainduz eta indartuz; edo lurralde osora zabaltzen den kultur eta kirol-eskaintza hizkuntza-irizpide egokiekin egingo direla ziurtatuz. Euskararen alde edo euskaraz egiten diren jarduera masibo askok ere, hiriburuetan garatzen jarraitzea dirudi egokiena. Horrez gain, esan beharrik ez dago populazioaren zatirik handiena hiriburu-

10. Adibidez, 2021eko erabileraren kale-neurketetan Hegoaldeko lau hiriburuetan behatutako elkarrizketetan euskarak izan zuen pisua % 2,7koa izan zen Iruñean, % 3,5ekoa Bilbon, % 4,1ekoa Gasteizen eta % 15,3koa Donostian (Altuna *et al.*, 2022).

inguruetan bizi dela jakinda, agerikoa dela eremu horietako esku-hartzean asmatzea funtsezko erronka dela indarberritzeak aurrera egin dezan.

Lurralde-estrategia bat euskararentzat

Lurraldean jarduteko bost irizpide orokor

Nahikoa arrazoi badaude, beraz, lurralde-irizpideak indarberritze-ahaleginean berariaz txertatzeko. Jarraian, gure ustez Hizkuntza Politikaren oinarrian beharko luketen lurraldeari buruzko irizpide orokor batzuk proposatuko ditugu, gaiaren inguruko eztabaida bideratzeko lagundu dezaketelakoan. Euskararen aldeko lanean diharduten erakunde publiko, pribatu eta sozialak eduki hauen gaineko eztabaida zintzo batetik oinarrizko adostasunetara heltzea aurrerapauso handia litzateke.

Lehen irizpidea: lurralde-eremu guzti-guztietan eragin behar da. Zehazki, hiztunen hiru laurdenak pasa (% 77,2) erdararen nagusitasun handiko udalerrietan bizi direnez, guztiz okerra litzateke horiek albo batera uztea. Are gehiago, lan honen helburuetatik at gelditzen den arren, indarberritze-prozesuak aurrera egin dezan, funtsezkoa da eremu horietan aurreratzeko estrategian asmatzea, orain arteko bidearen azterketatik abiatuta. Zona erdaldunagoetan funtsezkoa izango da, gure ustez, ezagutzaren hedapenean jarraitzea, euskaraz erraz arituko diren hiztunen multzoa handitzeko bitartekoak jartzea, euskaldunen saretzea erraztea, euskararen komunitatearen trinkotzean aurreratzeko, euskarazko praktiken eta jardueren ikusgarritasuna eta oihartzuna sustatzea, eta abar. Asmatu egin behar da lurralde horietan, gainerakoetan bezala, nola handitu gure lanaren eragina. Azken batean, Euskal Herria geroz eta lurralde interkonektatuagoa da, eremu guztietan eragitea ezinbestekoa da.

Bigarrena: lurralde batzuen eta besteen egoera soziolinguistikoa ezberdina izanik, **esku-hartze moldeak ere ezberdindua** beharko du izan gehienetan. Euskara indartsuago edo ahulago egon, oinarrian errealitate eta dinamika soziolinguistikoko ezberdindua aurkitzen dugu; komeni da eremu mota bakoitzarentzat esku-hartze molde egokituak garatzea. Komeniko litzateke, lehenik, irizpide soziolinguistikoen gainean udalerrien tipologia batzuk zorrotz finkatzea. Hortik aurrera, ez litzateke aurrerapen makala, tipologia bakoitzerako irizpide nagusi, esku-hartze molde eta esperientzia praktikoko arrakastatsuen zerrendak osatzea, euskararen aldeko lana geroz eta eraginkorrago egiteko. Udalerrri-tipologiek bestalde (bakoitzari dagokion esku-hartze molde multzoarekin) udalerrri erdaldunenetatik euskaldunenetarako ibilbidea irudikatuko

lukete; udalerri bakoitzak bere egungo egoera eta aurreratuz gero *hurrengo geltokia* zein litzatekeen ikusi ahalko luke segida horretan.

Hirugarrena: azkarrago aurreratzeko eta egokiago eragiteko lagungarria da lurraldeei rol ezberdinak aitortzea. Zehazki, ingurune euskaldunagoei motor-lidergo-aitzindaritzza papera dagokie indarberritze-prozesuan. Dinamika soziolinguistikoa hori horrela gertatzen da, berez, guk horren arabera esku hartu edo ez: zona euskaldunagoek euskara irradiatzen dute gainerakoetara (zona erdaldunagoek erdara). Gure esku-hartzean berezko joera hori kontuan hartzeak onurak ekarriko ditu indarberritze-prozesuan. Marinelak itsas korronteekin nola, guk ere errazago aurreratuko dugu gure errealitate soziolinguistikoko barruko korronteak ezagututa eta horiek gure alde baliatuta. Aitzindaritzza-lidergoa jokatu lezakete eremu euskaldunenek, bertan abiatutako politika aurreratuek eta bertako praktika sozialek gainerakoei noranzkoa erakutsiz. Aipatutako lidergoa, ezin da ulertu modu erabatekoan; hiriburuek, adibidez, hainbat eginkizun betetzen jarraituko lukete, lehenago azaldu bezala. Eragin praktikoa, soziolinguistikoki eraginkor batez ari gara lurralde hauek jokatu beharreko motor-izaeraz ari garenean.

Badakigu ez dela erronka erraza proposatzen duguna: herri ez oso handiak hirigune askoz populatuagoetan eragin dezaketen trakzionatze-efektua mugatua eta partziala izango da, ezinbestean. Horregatik, sakon pentsatu eta hautatu beharko da soziolinguistikoki kritikoak diren zein arlotan saiatuko garen arnasmune eta ingurune euskaldunen aitzindaritzza-paper hori indartzen; denean ezingo baita.

Laugarrena: egin dezaketen ekarpen handiagoagatik, gainerako eremuak «euskalduntzen» jokatzen duten zereginagatik eta arnasmuneek hizkuntza gutxituaren osasun orokorrerako duten garrantziagatik, **arreta berezia eskaini behar zaie lurralde-eremu euskaldunenei**. Horrela, euskalduntze-prozesuan funtsezko alderdia izango da euskara nagusi den lurralde-eremua zabaltzea (neurritz) eta sendotzea (bere euskalduntasunean). Egungo arnasmuneak babestearekin eta sendotzearekin batera, aktiboki bilatuko da egun arnasmune-izaera ez duten udalerri euskaldunak ere, arnasmune izatera pasatzea etorkizun ahalik eta hurbilenean, horrela euskararen nagusitasunezko lurralde-eremua sendotuz eta zabalduz. Gainerako eremuetara euskara irradiatzen duen eguzkiaren neurria eta potentzia handituz. Logika horretan, jarduteari begira, zenbat eta lurralde euskaldunagoa izan, orduan eta ahalegin bereziagoa egitea komeni da eremu hori zaintzeko eta garatzeko.

Bosgarrena: zona euskaldunagoak (arnasguneak bereziki) gainerako eremuen euskalduntzerako baliabide eraginkor(ago) bihurtu behar dira. Guk dakigula orain arte ez da sistematikoki ikertu eremu hauek eta bertan hazitako hiztunek gainerako zonen euskalduntzean jokatu izan duten paperaz. Baina mamia duen gaia dela deritzogu. Lehenik, udalerri horiek espazio gisa ingurune erdaldunagoetako hiztunentzat jokatu duten paperaz ari gara (bertan euskara ikasteko edo praktikatzeko, oporrak giro euskaldunean igarotzeko eta abar). Bigarrenik, inguru euskaldunagoan hazi eta ondoren zona erdaldunagoetara aldatu diren hiztunek euren bizileku berrian duten eragina hartu behar da kontuan: hiztun gaitu, aktibo eta ez gutxitan militanteak transferitu dira zona euskaldunagoetatik besteetara. Hirugarrenik, aipatu behar da hiztunek eta eremu euskaldunetan bizitzen jarraitzen dutenek ere gainerako eremuetan egiten duten ekarpena: irakasle gisa, proiektu ugarietako profesional gisa edo kultur gile gisa, besteak beste. Aurrera begira, modu askotan gertatzen den irradiazio-lan hori berariaz bilatzea eta bultzatzea ildo emankorra izan daitekeelakoan gaude. Arnasguneek berez jokatzeko duten paper hori optimizatuz eta aprobeztatuz; ingurune ezberdinetako euskaldunen arteko sinergiak sortuz. Ahalik eta gehien bultzatu behar da arnasguneen paper hori, betiere, praktika horrek euren euskalduntasuna eta arnasgune-izaera kolokan jartzen ez dituen heinean.

Oharra: aipatu diren irizpideak lurralde osoko perspektiban bezala, pentsa daiteke hein batean behintzat, berdintsu balio dezaketela udalerri bateko auzo edo herrietarako ere.

Mapa bat indarberritzean aurreratzeko

Aipatutako irizpideetan oinarrituz eta horiek aplikatzen laguntzeko, **babes eta sustapen bereziko eremu bat** legez zehaztearen komenientzia aztertu beharko litzateke¹¹. Eremu euskaldunenari legezko babes sendoagoa ematea bilatuko litzateke, bertan politika aurreratuagoak egitea ahalbidetuz, eremu hori zaintzen eta garatzen lagunduz, ortzi-mugan euskara sozialki nagusi izango den eremua sendotzea eta hedatzea izanik, batetik; eta eremu horrek bere «irradiatze-lana» optimizatzea, bestetik. Azken batean, babes eta sustapen bereziko eremuarekin, eremu euskalduna babestea eta hedatzea bilatuko litzateke, aldi berean Euskal Herriko udalerri eta eskualdeen arteko hartu-eman eta dinamismoa hizkuntzarentzat mesedegarri izango den moduan garatzea bilatuz.

11. Beste aukera bat litzateke lurralde osoa bere baitan hartuko lukeen legezko eremu-sailkapen linguistiko bat lantzea; aukera posibleen balizko onurak eta oztopoak aztertu beharko lirateke bide egokiena aukeratzeko.

Gure iritziz, babes- eta sustapen-eremu horrek *gune zabal* bat zehaztu beharko luke lehenik, bilatuz epe ertain-luzera euskara nagusi izango den lurralde geografikoki jarraitu, demografikoki ohargarri eta soziolinguistikoki sendoa eraikitzea. Bestetik, bai gune zabal horretan baita gune horretatik kanpo gelditzen den zonan ere, barruan egon daitezkeen tipologia ezberdinak ere zehaztea lagungarria litzateke, aurreko puntuko bigarren irizpidean aipatutakoaren bidetik.

Eragiteko hiru norabide orokor

Nola eragin arnasmuneetan eta, zabalago, udalerri euskaldunetan? UEMA lantzen ari den esku-hartze ereduari jarraituz, aipa ditzagun labur-labur lanerako hiru funtsezko norabide:

1. **Politika integraletara jauzia** eman beharra dago. Ingurune hauen sendotasun soziolinguistikoa bermatzeko alderdi demografikoei, ekonomiari, lurralde-antolamenduari eta herri horiek komunitate jasangarri eta bizi gisa sendotuko dituzten alderdiei kasu egin behar zaie, eta horietan eragin. Lurralde horien garapen integralerako politikak behar dira azken batean. Horrekin batera, maila orokorreko politikek ingurune hauetan izango dituzten ondorio soziolinguistikoa zaintzea, neurtzea eta kontrolatzea komeniko da.
2. Tradizionalki **Hizkuntza Politikak** landu izan dituen alderdiei dagokienez (hezkuntza, helduen euskalduntzea, kultura, hedabideak, aisia...) **politika aurreratuak** behar dira lurralde hauetarako, araugintzatik zein sustapenetik eraginez.
3. Ingurune horietako hiztunen **kontzientzia linguistikoa** eta ahalduztzea sendotzea ere funtsezko norabidea da. Maila mikroan diskurtso eta praktika linguistiko egokiak indartzea nahitaezkoa da.

Ez da testu honen xedea norabide horiek garatzea. Gehiago sakondu nahi izanda, ikus Eusko Jaurlaritzak, Nafarroako Gobernuak eta UEMAk 2024an argitaratutako *Euskararen Arnasmuneak. Definizioaren eta erronken berrikuspena* dokumentua. Horrez gain, erakunde publikoek arnasmuneei begirako politika berriak inplementatzeko asmoa adierazi izan dute behin baino gehiagotan azken hilabete eta urteetan; eta, zehazki, UEMAk lurralde-estrategia ikuspegiarekin garatu beharreko politiken proposamena lantzeko asmoa adierazi du.

Ekarpen bat euskarak behar duen olaturako

Adierazle soziolinguistikoek eta aurrera begirako proiektio kezkagarriek euskararen aldeko borrokan urrats argiak eman beharra erakusten digute. Berriz

ere indarberritze-norabidean jarriko gaituen olatu berri baten premia dugu euskaldunok. Olatu-jauzi-pizkunde horrek, beste osagai askorekin batera, beharko ditu gure jarduna birpentsatzera eta hobetzera eramango gaituzten gogoetak eta proposamenak. Norabide horretan egindako ahalegin bat da testu hau.

Lan honetan saiatu gara azaltzen, orain arte euskararen aldeko lana emaitza onekin egituratu duen ardatz nagusi bati (belaunaldi berrietan lehentasunak jartzea agindu digun adinaren arabera ardatzari) bigarren ardatz bat eranstean onura argiak ekarriko lizkiokeela indarberritze-prozesuari. Lurraldearen euskalduntasunaren arabera inpaktu hazkorren fenomenoak pentsatzera garamatza lurralde euskaldunenari aitzindaritzapapera emateak eta lehentasunez babesteak onura orokorrak ekarriko lizkiokeela euskararen indarberritzeari. Errazago eta azkarrago aurreratuko genukeela, alegia. Ekarpeneren amaiera aldean norabide horretan aurreratzeko lurralde-estrategia bati buruz hitz egiten ere ausartu gara; horri buruz esandakoak, har bitez, lehen proposamen eztabaidagarri, hobegarri eta garatu beharreko gisa.

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Territories of higher speaker density in minoritised language communities

International Conference

Asier Basurto Arruti, Iñaki Iurrebaso Biteri (editors)

Udako Euskal **Unibertsitatea**
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1. Foreword

This publication originates in the context of the international conference on *Territories of Higher Speaker Density in Minoritised Language Communities* (*Arnasguneak*), held in Azpeitia on 16-17 October 2025. The aim of the conference was to examine the importance of territories with a high density of speakers—known as *arnasguneak*—in the revitalisation processes of minoritised languages, and to share research, experiences and proposals related to this topic.

In the case of minoritised languages, *arnasguneak* constitute key sociolinguistic spaces: in these areas the minoritised language tends to dominate everyday communication, and the conditions for intergenerational transmission are stronger. For this reason, such territories are important indicators of language vitality, and, at the same time, they function as important social laboratories for revitalisation strategies.

Over recent decades, particular attention has been paid to *arnasguneak* within Basque sociolinguistics and language policy. However, similar realities have also been identified in many other minoritised language communities around the world, and have been described using different terms, such as territories of higher speaker density, language strongholds, or vernacular communities. This demonstrates that the topic has an international dimension and requires an interdisciplinary perspective. It was in this context that the initiative to organise this conference emerged: to contrast experiences, share knowledge, and explore more deeply the role that *arnasguneak* may play in the revitalisation of minoritised languages.

The conference was jointly organised by the **Udako Euskal Unibertsitatea (UEU)**, the **Udalerri Euskaldunen Mankomunitatea (UEMA)**, the **Soziolinguistika Klusterra**, and the **Coppieters Foundation**, with the support of several public institutions. The initiative was based on a collaborative approach, seeking to bring academic research, public policy, local experiences and civic initiatives into dialogue in order to address the issue of *arnasguneak* from a broad and integrated perspective.

The texts collected in this volume are based on a selection of the papers and reflections presented at the conference. The aim is not to offer a mere transcription of the event, but rather to present in a structured way the ideas and discussions that emerged there, making them accessible to a wider academic and social audience.

We hope that this work will contribute to strengthening knowledge about *arnasguneak*, clarifying their role in strategies for the revitalisation of minoritised languages, and inspiring new lines of research and action in the future.

2. What are and what are not breathing spaces? Why are they important?

Mikel Zalbide (Member of Euskaltzaindia - Academy of the Basque Language)

Editor's note:

Mikel Zalbide has been a leading figure in the introduction, definition and dissemination of the concept of 'arnasgune' or breathing spaces in Basque sociolinguistics, both through his direct relationship with Joshua A. Fishman and his work, and as a result of his professional activities, research and reflections regarding the revitalisation of the Basque language. The debates and knowledge that emerged from the International Conference on the topic—and its related publication—were built upon foundations laid by Mikel Zalbide. Consequently, during the sessions held in Azpeitia (the Basque Country) on 16 and 17 October 2025, a video interview summarising Zalbide's perspective on breathing spaces was shown (<https://vimeo.com/1127291981>). In light of the above, in this publication, we have decided to include some passages from an explanatory article written by the author on the concept of breathing spaces.

Issue number 110 of the Bat Soziolinguistika journal was a special issue focusing on this specific topic. The issue featured an article by Zalbide entitled 'Arnasguneak. Etorkizuneko erronkak' [Breathing spaces. Future challenges], in which he outlined the main characteristics of the concept¹.

What follows are some selected passages from the aforementioned article. Those who wish to read the work in its entirety should refer to the original text. Being well aware that publishing fragments provides only a partial view yet guided by the principle of respecting the literal text of the original, we have chosen to reproduce the following three sections as they stand. The three sections are as follows:

- I. What is a breathing space?
- II. What is not a breathing space, either partially or fully?
- III. Why are breathing spaces so important for the revitalisation of the Basque language?

1. Zalbide, Mikel (2019). Arnasguneak. Etorkizuneko Erronkak. *Bat Soziolinguistika*, 110(1), 11–78 [Sociolinguistics Cluster]. <https://bat.sociolinguistika.eus/produktua/bat-110-2019-1-arnasguneak-etorkizuneko-erronkak/>

I. What is a breathing space, in general?

In his well-known work *Reversing Language Shift*, Joshua A. Fishman (1991: 58) briefly mentions the idea of a ‘physical breathing space’ or *arnasgunea* in Basque (Zalbide, 2001)². As a first approximation, a breathing space can be defined as a ‘demographically concentrated space where Xish can be on its own turf, predominant and unharassed’. In other words, and referring specifically to our context, a breathing space is somewhere:

- With a high demographic concentration of Basque speakers: all or most of the population can speak Basque, and in particular, *all or most people habitually speak Basque among themselves on a daily basis*.
- A clear majority of everyday conversations are held in Basque, and this predominance is not questioned: ‘predominant and unharassed’. Simply put, the local population communicates in Basque. It is a living social norm, as widespread as wearing a swimsuit or bikini, but not a bra and knickers, on La Concha beach in Donostia-San Sebastian³. This is both a common and, for some reason, unbreakable norm. The same occurs in breathing spaces, where the use of Basque by locals to speak about all manner of everyday issues is the dominant norm.
- Thanks to this clear predominance of Basque in common, everyday speech, *inhabitants’ mother tongue is transmitted from generation to generation without any significant language shift*. As a result of this transmission, *the chain of the language’s centuries-long existence remains uninterrupted in breathing spaces*. And, moreover, despite the risks that may exist, *this intergenerational chain of transmission any significant language shift*.
- The bases for everyday verbal interactions are well-known in terms of the principal areas of activity and relational networks: the home, the local neighbourhood, out on the street and with friends, in bars and shops, at

2. The term ‘breathing space’ has been applied also in other academic fields. In medicine, for instance, it is used in works on allergies (see, for example, Gregg Mitman’s *Breathing Space: How Allergies Shape Our Lives and Landscapes*. Yale University Press). This application is not directly related to what we mean when we talk about breathing spaces. Here, we are not referring to medical health, but rather to the idea developed by Joshua A. Fishman in the field of sociology of language, specifically in reference to revitalising weakened languages.

3. This rule is not absolute. There are, of course, women who sunbathe or swim topless (not many, but some). Nor is it a rule that always existed and will continue to exist forever. Social norms change periodically. But for as long as they remain unchanged, they are the norm: we are all aware of the social norms in effect in our specific place and time, and generally, most of us adhere to them in our daily lives. Ultimately, a social norm remains a ‘norm’ for as long as it persists.

church and in the town square, at leisure and sports centres, at school, and (when possible) in the workplace. If Basque is the predominant language spoken in these areas, then we are in what can be referred to as a *full breathing space*. However, when Basque predominance starts to falter, then the area ceases being a *full breathing space* and becomes an *affected breathing space* instead. If the faltering continues and the drop in Basque use becomes significant, then the area ceases being a *breathing space* altogether.

Let us reiterate here (because this is a fundamental point): from a demolinguistic perspective, Basque is 'lord and master' in Basque breathing spaces. In addition to being able to speak Basque, all or most of the population residing in breathing spaces (either because they were born there or moved there later for personal or work-related reasons) *live in Basque and conduct their everyday business in that language*. These speakers feel 'at home' in the breathing space, which offers them a 'safe' geo-territorial area in which to speak Basque in their everyday interactions. It is a place where Basque speakers coexist in Basque with other Basque speakers; a space in which Basque is clearly 'lord and master'. Breathing spaces are not places in which language is a source of conflict; they are not normally a source of sociolinguistic problems. No one from either inside or outside the community forces them to speak Basque in their everyday lives. It is simply the prevailing social norm; it is what is considered normal. Moreover, generally speaking, no one from outside the community harasses or attacks them because they choose to live their lives in Basque. Children, teenagers and young people acquire the language spoken by their parents fully and proficiently⁴. Although the internal structure of the language and their manner of expression may vary, children, young people and working-age adults primarily speak Basque, using the language routinely with family members, friends and other residents in their everyday conversations⁵.

This has clear consequences for the future, since, statistically speaking, most young people in the village choose a fellow Basque-speaker as their partner and settle either in the village itself or in a nearby breathing space to form a Basque-

4. As mentioned previously, Nancy Dorian has made a wonderful contribution to this topic.

5. The influence of language contact is generally growing stronger in breathing spaces. In addition to Spanish words, many expressions are also being adopted by younger generations living in these areas. This phenomenon should be considered within a broader perspective. For example, during the years Elena Mendizabal and I spent studying in Zerain (see the *Xaguarte* magazine from that period), the vocabulary of the under-60 generation in relation to the rural world was notably poorer than that of their over-70 counterparts. However, despite being increasingly influenced by Spanish, most adults and young people in Zerain still speak to each other in Basque. It is this dominance configuration that matters here.

speaking family, and it is this establishment of Basque-speaking families that guarantees the continuity of the language community, which must be renewed from generation to generation. Friendships and the social life of the village (as well as, as far as possible, the workplace) make it possible for these speakers to live their lives in Basque. Furthermore, thanks to this continued dominance of the Basque language⁶, there is no widespread shift from Basque to Spanish in Basque breathing spaces⁷. And complete language loss is even rarer⁸. Intergenerational continuity is more securely guaranteed there than anywhere else.

In short, in terms of everyday communications, what is normal in healthy language communities is normal in breathing spaces. The *intergenerational transmission* of the mother tongue is the primary mechanism of linguistic survival. This is one of the main sociolinguistic characteristics that every healthy language community shares in comparison to their weakened counterparts. Indeed, it is the main characteristic for many. The *intergenerational transmission* of Basque is sounder in Basque breathing spaces than anywhere else. This is a fundamental characteristic that, from a geo-territorial perspective, only occurs in breathing spaces. Children living in breathing spaces learn Basque naturally, without any special arrangements, often understanding and, above all, speaking fluently before even starting school. Whether they be monolingual or bilingual speakers, all or most children in these areas are (comparatively) Basque speakers. Even without Basque-medium schooling (and with Spanish-medium schooling), breathing spaces have survived for generations. But we still need to be cautious. It is true that, these days, schools are a great help: a) children spend a significant portion of their day (around 16%) speaking and listening to Basque with their teachers and classmates; b) unlike before, children learn to read and write in Basque; c) in addition to the informal-intimate registers of the Basque that is spoken locally in their town or village, they also learn to use the formal variant of the language; d) they also learn other languages (Spanish and, to some extent, English) (see Zalbide 2016). Unlike before, the school system nowadays is supportive. Supportive, and, in this new society in which we live, very necessary. However, schools alone do

6. We recall here the concept of 'dominance configuration' as it is used in the field of sociolinguistics (not the psycholinguistic concept developed by Uriel Weinreich in 1953). See, for example, Fishman, Joshua A., Robert L. Cooper, Roxana Ma, et al., 1968: *Bilingualism in the Barrio (The measurement and description of language dominance in Bilinguals)*. For a more local perspective, see, for example, Zalbide 2009 and 2016.

7. When we talk about a widespread change in language, we are referring here to what is known as *Sprachverschiebung* in German, *language shift* in English and *desplazamiento lingüístico* in Spanish. For a local perspective, see, for example, Zalbide 2001, 2002 and 2016.

8. Regarding technical terminology and the conceptual work derived from it, see, for example, the German concept of *Sprachverlust* and, above all, the English term *language loss* with its many synonyms. From a more gradual perspective, we could also refer to (among others) *language attrition*, *language obsolescence*, *language loss* and *language death*.

not guarantee the future of the language, not even in breathing spaces⁹. The broad spectrum of everyday ordinary language use¹⁰ is, always and everywhere, the dominant norm in healthy language communities. This is the normal pathway of continuity for all the world's vital and robust languages, which are passed on from generation to generation and, barring serious disruptions, endure down the centuries. Maintaining this pathway of continuity has a clear set of priorities: first, the weakened language must be kept alive and then the entire weakened community of speakers must be revitalised. Breathing spaces are, in the opinion of several experts (see, especially, S. Altube¹¹ and J. Fishman for a combination of both local and global perspectives), the principal starting point and strongest support for any successful attempt at revitalising a weakened language. The loss of these spaces greatly hinders recovery (not to mention revitalisation).

Other characteristics. Full and affected breathing spaces

The elements outlined above define what true breathing spaces are. But could anything more be said about them? What are these breathing spaces like, here and now? We believe that the following circumstances should be added to the previous definition and explanation.

- a) Rather than *mere social-functional or purely virtual* areas, breathing spaces are *geo-territorial environments*; they are neighbourhoods, villages, towns, inter-municipal areas and, sometimes (albeit increasingly rarely), entire regions in which people conduct their everyday business and live their lives in Basque (totally or principally).

9. This rather bleak conclusion coincides with several confirmed events around the world. Take the case of Slovenian speakers residing in Styria, Austria for example. Using the *Diffusionsphysik* method, K. Prochazka and G. Vogl, from the University of Vienna, recently concluded that 'the simulation shows that other habitat conditions (the language of schools, and in parishes) are of minor influence' (emphasis added). Source: K. Prochazka and G. Vogl, 2017: Quantifying the driving factors for language shift in a bilingual region. PNAS 114(17), DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1617252114. See also Eva Obermüller: 'Welche Sprache in Schulen oder Gemeinden offiziell gesprochen wurde, hatte zumindest laut den Berechnungen kaum Einfluss auf die Entwicklung' (emphasis added). Source: Eva Obermüller, 'Warum Sprachen verschwinden'. science.ORF.at (published 14 March 2017). This bleak conclusion about the poor results of school-based maintenance or revitalisation sessions for the weakened language is consistent with the most elaborate theories of language shift. See, among others, Fishman's repeated remarks on the limited influence of schools: see Fishman 1991 (an earlier paper on the subject is available in Basque: Fishman 1990).

10. This is especially true for children and young people in relation to the language they speak at home, in their local neighbourhood, among friends, in the park, on the street, at school, when playing sport and in the audiovisual contents they view. For adults, we must also add the workplace and in their increasingly broader networks of relationships, both face-to-face and online.

11. See, in particular, the following key articles: 'La vida del euskera' and 'Más sobre la vida del euskera' (more details in the References section).

- b) Basque breathing spaces are small or very small in terms of population and, in general, fairly peripheral in terms of their territorial location. No capital city or indeed any city with more than 50,000 inhabitants has been a Basque breathing space for some time now. There is one main town: Azpeitia, which is currently by far the largest of all the Basque language breathing spaces.
- c) Most breathing spaces are located in Gipuzkoa, although there are also some in Bizkaia and Navarre. However, outside these areas, very few towns are breathing spaces, and those that are hold a fairly dubious status (in Araba-Álava we could perhaps talk about Aramaio, and in the Northern Basque Country, the Baigorri area may be considered as such).
- d) However, these breathing spaces are 'islands' nowadays, meaning that there is no broad breathing space extending from Bizkaia to Navarre with Gipuzkoa in the middle. From the 19th century onwards, the fragmentation of strong Basque-speaking areas gradually spread and is now practically complete, mainly as the result of an intense language shift: the most populated cities (capital cities), large industrial centres, main railway and road links and administrative hubs were the first to shift towards Spanish across large regions that until then had been breathing spaces¹², thereby turning the remaining breathing spaces into marginal areas from a geo-territorial perspective also.

The fact that in some areas people live their daily lives 'totally or mainly' in Basque does not in any way mean that the entire geo-territorial extent of the Basque-speaking community (Basque-speaking towns, the Basque-speaking region in general) is divided into two, with *breathing spaces* on the one side and the neighbourhoods, towns and regions that are *not breathing spaces* on the other. The sociolinguistic map of recent decades has become increasingly more complex than this. From those areas in which Basque is most prevalent to those in which Spanish is (almost) the only language spoken there is a long *continuum*, and it is along that continuum that most Basque speakers live. To summarise, at one end of the continuum (occupying a very small space) are those areas in which Basque is most prevalent. We can call this *the Basque-speaking end*.

However, even though they are all located at the same end, not all breathing spaces are the same. They are not all identical; nor indeed are they all 'strongholds

12. According to Eguren, during the mid-19th century, most of Gipuzkoa was a breathing space. Eguren's rigorous description should nevertheless be compared with other accounts.

of the Basque language'. Even within the most Basque-speaking end of the geo-territorial continuum there is a clear internal differentiation; a clear *sub-continuum*. Not all breathing spaces offer Basque the same level of protection. There is a difference between one breathing space and another. The word *breathing space* is insufficient in some cases; it is a weak term, especially when it comes to highlighting the (increasingly evident) differences that exist between one breathing space and another.

Instead of dividing them into two or three different categories, we could easily divide them into four or more, depending on the type of internal variability taken into consideration. For the moment, however, we do not see the advantage in conducting more sophisticated studies, so we will analyse the current (and evident) changing and complex reality of Basque breathing spaces using two (or three) different divisions.

II. What are not breathing spaces, either partially or fully?

II.1. Basque-speaking municipalities are not always breathing spaces

These two terms (*Basque-speaking municipality* and *breathing space*) can be and quite often are used together, but they are not synonyms. In terms of both their theoretical formulation and their practical application, they are two different things. Although we frequently use them together, in both everyday language and more elaborate explanations, they are not always the same. To our mind, the main differences between the two are as follows.

- a) They have different operational definitions. Basque-speaking municipalities are identified on the basis of the linguistic competence of their citizens: is the majority of the population able to speak Basque? A specific percentage is defined, establishing the minimum threshold (let's assume 80%) for operationally determining whether or not a municipality can be classed as 'Basque-speaking'¹³. However, the operational definition of what a Basque-speaking municipality is does not explicitly take into consideration whether or not all or most citizens actually speak Basque in their daily lives. Clearly, Basque knowledge (i.e. being *able* to speak the language) and use (*actually* speaking it on a regular basis) are closely

13. In our opinion, Iñaki Lurrebaso's work in this field offers the clearest definition, and the one most readily available for practical application.

linked, since citizens (all or the vast majority at least) must have a good knowledge of the language in order to speak it amongst themselves. However, being able to speak Basque does not necessarily lead to people actually using it, either orally or (especially) in written form. It is citizens' everyday language habits that determine whether or not a municipality or area is considered a breathing space. The key question to be answered is: in the town's social life, is Basque spoken, exclusively or predominantly at least, at home, in the neighbourhood, on the street and among friends? If the answer is yes, then that municipality or area is considered a breathing space; if the answer is no, then it is not. Saying 'maybe most of the time they don't speak it, but they do know how to speak it' is not enough. For an area to be a breathing space, the (vast) majority of the population must express themselves in Basque, although not necessarily everywhere or all the time, nor in every interaction regardless of who the other person is¹⁴. However, it must be the main language of communication in the principal places, situations and relational networks that make up the daily life of the town. And most of all, the people living there must actually *speak* Basque¹⁵.

- b) *Basque-speaking municipalities* are 'municipalities' (in terms of size) insofar as they are defined as such. *Breathing spaces* may also be 'municipalities' in terms of size, but they do not necessarily have to be. They may be larger¹⁶. Take, for example, the central and lower Urola area (from Azpeitia to Zumaia), or the Leiza-Areso-Berastegi-Eldua(in)-Berrobi area. Or they may be smaller, although here we do not have a clear and simple example. For instance, do the Etxano-Duda-Epaltza-Alakao-Arrinda neighbourhoods of Amorebieta count as a breathing space?

14. When a Spanish-speaker comes to the municipality (as a tourist, or to spend the day), for example, people talk to them in Spanish. This does not necessarily upset the everyday language habits of the local population. However, if many Spanish-speakers come often (filling the village bars, squares and playgrounds, or even settling down there), then it is another story.

15. It is worth remembering that written interactions are also increasingly prevalent, especially among younger generations. Consequently, written interactions are fast becoming part of basic everyday communications, although there is still a significant difference between the two. Many Basque speakers read the paper in Spanish. And many more choose to read official or work-related documents in that language.

16. Assuming Eguren's assessment is not entirely inaccurate, 150 years ago large swathes of Gipuzkoa were breathing spaces, almost the whole province in fact, excluding the capital and some other towns. A vibrant Basque-speaking continuum still exists around Izarraitz and Hernio, extending well beyond the official municipal boundaries. The same is true also in several small villages located in the vicinity of the Aizkorri-Aloña mountain range.

- c) Although in most cases the term Basque-speaking municipality is used in a descriptive sense, it sometimes adopts a more dynamic perspective, particularly when it is used to analyse whether the percentage of people who can speak Basque is increasing, remaining the same or decreasing. In contrast, since it focuses exclusively on ordinary, everyday use, the conceptual development of breathing space is oriented towards determining whether this normal, everyday use is being transmitted or lost.

In short, the operational definition of what a Basque-speaking municipality is stems primarily from a demolinguistic analysis of linguistic competence, or in other words, what percentage of inhabitants are able to speak Basque, and how that percentage changes across age groups. This is usually the main subject under study. In contrast, the theoretical elements of language sociology on which the concept of breathing space is grounded are as follows: a) common everyday language use and, as a consequence of this general use, b) the intergenerational transmission and continuity of these language habits. *Basque-speaking municipalities* have a different operational definition and a different practical application. Therefore, all *breathing spaces* are *Basque-speaking municipalities* (or neighbourhoods or districts), but not all *Basque-speaking municipalities* are (here and now) *breathing spaces*.

The fact that they are two different things does not mean they are always very different or indeed incompatible. As will be explained later, in reality, *Basque-speaking municipalities* and *breathing spaces* are, in many cases, very similar to each other. However, they are not the same thing and, in some cases, there is a considerable difference between them.

II.2. Breathing spaces are not ‘places where most Basque speakers live’

In terms of population, most breathing spaces are small (or very small). Consequently, most Basque speakers (more than three-quarters in fact) do not live in breathing spaces. Moreover, most of those who express themselves more often in Basque than in Spanish (or as frequently in Basque as in Spanish) in their everyday lives do not live in breathing spaces. Those who do live in breathing spaces are, therefore, clearly in the minority within the entire linguistic-competence-based language community.

Language revitalisation cannot, therefore, be limited to breathing spaces. This said, despite being secondary or peripheral in terms of numbers, breathing

spaces are nevertheless central elements in the revitalisation process, not from the demolinguiistic-quantitative perspective of linguistic competence, but from two other perspectives: a) the predominance of Basque in everyday language habits, and b) the complete intergenerational transmission of a dense group of speakers.

The special importance of breathing spaces does not merely lie in the percentage of inhabitants who ‘can speak’ Basque, but rather in the high concentration of actual speakers and the ‘traditional social habits’ that result in Basque being the prevalent language spoken in everyday interactions, along with the guarantee of intergenerational transmission and continuity. Most of those who know how to speak Basque do not live in breathing spaces, not by any stretch of the imagination. However, those who do live in them are the ones who have the most vibrant, healthy and therefore most readily transmitted Basque-language practice. See, a little later, what S. Altube and J. A. Fishman have said about this.

II.3. Several instances (including some intense Basque strongholds) where Basque is prominent¹⁷ but which are not, by definition, breathing spaces

The following instances or strongholds cannot, by definition, be considered *breathing spaces*: a) the Basque-language school network (mainly the D model), university departments or Basque language schools for adults; b) Basque-language media: *Euskadi Irratia*, *Euskal Telebista*, *Berria*, *Argia*, *Herria*, etc.; c) bilingual government departments, Basque Language Services, etc.; d) certain initiatives aimed at fostering cultural consumption in Basque: Basque book and record fairs, Basque theatre plays, singing and dance groups, etc.; e) Basque language associations and initiatives designed to promote the Basque language: *Kilometroak*, *Korrika*, etc. These places or events are not *breathing spaces*, since most people involved in them live outside them for most of the year, and spend most of their time outside them. The extensive and continuous networks of relationships that channel the everyday language habits of these speakers are primarily located outside these instances. Moreover, in every healthy language community, the long chain of intergenerational language transmission (lasting 35 to 40 years) is based on, materialises in, is nourished by, complements and develops in broader and more fundamental spheres of activity than these venues.

17. What do we mean here by prominent? We mean sometimes predominant, and occasionally complete/absolute.

In environments in which Spanish is predominant (and sometimes clearly dominant) in daily life (usually out in the street), some of the instances and venues mentioned above may become Basque strongholds. This is particularly true of the school system in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (and, to a certain extent, in Navarre and the Northern Basque Country also). These venues are undoubtedly of considerable importance in the Basque revitalisation process. Indeed, they are vital (each in its own field and to its own extent) to keeping many groups of Basque speakers alive and significantly strengthening their everyday networks of interaction. These strongholds (particularly the school system and other social-functional environments) often constitute valuable components of breathing spaces and other similar areas. Both individually and collectively, they are a valuable source of help in the process of recovering a weakened language. However, not all such examples (even strongholds) are breathing spaces. They are not the primary source, the independent and permanent foundation, of everyday language habits¹⁸. They are not areas that span generations, where those in a certain age range are very prominent and others weak or insignificant. They are not a guarantee of intergenerational continuity and transmission. Breathing spaces are, to a considerable degree at least, all these things¹⁹; other places and settings (even language strongholds) are not. Although these social-functional venues and settings may occasionally become strongholds for the language, they do not constitute the broad and permanent basis of everyday language, much less a guarantee of intergenerational transmission. To our mind, referring to these venues or settings as ‘social-functional breathing spaces’ is unnecessarily confusing. In our view, applying the label ‘breathing spaces’ to other social-functional venues and settings, while disregarding the features that define breathing spaces—everyday language practices, high speaker density, a geo-territorial basis, dense internal networks, and, consequently, the capacity for full intergenerational transmission—ultimately dilutes the concept itself. III. Why are breathing spaces so important to the Basque revitalisation process?

We have already mentioned that, in terms of population, most (almost all) breathing spaces are small. This is not without its consequences, since demolinguistic analyses clearly demonstrate that most Basque speakers today

18. Let us consider the strongest and most widespread instance of a stronghold of this kind: the school system. Most students learn to speak outside the classroom, generally before even starting school (at home and with their families, in their local neighbourhood and playgrounds, with friends, while playing, etc.). Moreover, generally until the age of 16 or 18, or even later for those who go to university), they also spend most of their waking hours outside of school. And outside of school hours, the weight and influence of extracurricular life are particularly important.

19. This has been the case for generations and centuries. And it continues to be the case today, so long as they have not been affected too much.

live outside these breathing spaces²⁰. Most centres for promoting Basque cultural activities are also located outside breathing spaces: the main bilingual administrative departments, Basque-language media outlets and publishing houses, most university buildings and research centres, Basque-language theatre and music groups, etc. Most of these are found outside Basque breathing spaces. In many ways, breathing spaces are a marginal phenomenon, not a hotbed of social innovation.

Given that they are small, few in number and located on the margins, why then are they so important? Should not ambitious Basque cultural initiatives focus instead on the areas in which the majority of Basque speakers live? Namely capital cities and the ever-expanding conurbations that are the hallmark of the 21st century? Would it not be more reasonable to focus on the majority, and to leave those small, scattered geo-territorial environments (which, even in the best of cases, are in decline) and the needs and aspirations of their citizens for a later date? We do not believe it would. And this is why:

- a) 'Normal' everyday Basque, the language most similar to that spoken by normal speakers living in healthy language communities, exists **there** (in the breathing spaces) in full force. Or more precisely, it exists in full force, or at its strongest at least, there and often **only there**. **There**, Basque is spoken, exclusively or primarily, at home and in the street, among friends and in bars, in the different neighbourhoods and in the town square, at school and in the town hall. Basque is the predominant language (or at least the predominant spoken language) in the broader social environment (festive celebrations and community work, at church and in children's playgrounds, at cultural activities, political debates, sporting events and improvised Basque verse meetings). It's also present (partially) in the workplace, more often than anywhere else.
- b) People who live in breathing spaces speak Basque without any oddities or exceptions, both in the breathing space itself and in various settings within it. They speak Basque effortlessly, with no reward, self-censorship or sacrifice. They speak Basque simply because they are talking. Why? Because of the following unwritten social norm: 'this is how it is done here.' Local social norms dictate that 'this is how it should be done' in these areas. For as long as a social norm remains in effect, it is more decisive than many laws, and this norm, which is the key to the survival

20. Not only that: many breathing space residents 'live outside the breathing space' to some degree, since more and more work elsewhere, do most of their shopping elsewhere, do their A-levels (or equivalent), vocational training or university degree elsewhere, engage in leisure activities elsewhere, etc.

of the language, is only currently in effect in breathing spaces. Outside them, with the exception of certain areas within the social-functional space (such as, for example, the Basque-medium schooling system in capital cities and towns in which Spanish is the predominant language), this social norm is fractured, weak and often non-existent. In breathing spaces, the social norm that dictates that people should 'speak Basque' in the principal domains of their daily life (at home, in their neighbourhood, with their family and friends, in the town square and bars, at church and in the town hall²¹, during break time at school, in the *pelota* court, during local festivals and at funerals) remains in force, either fully or partially²².

- c) Breathing spaces demonstrate that the Basque-speaking community, which conducts everyday interactions in the Basque language, is alive and well in these areas. This is clearly visible to anyone. This vitality of everyday interactions in Basque is highly respected by Basque speakers and enthusiasts, as well as by many from outside this world (both locals and foreigners)²³. Being able to demonstrate that there is indeed a geo-territorial area in which Basque speakers live their lives in Basque is fundamental to the future of the Basque-speaking community. Breathing spaces demonstrate most clearly what it means to live 'normally' in Basque. If we want to ensure language normalisation, it is in these spaces that we find the type of Basque that is the most similar to the normal, everyday language of a healthy language community. It is there that we can obtain the most benefit from Basque promotion, especially in terms of action, with minimal additional costs and minimal criticism²⁴.
- d) Breathing spaces are a cradle for highly fluent Basque speakers. They are sources for speakers capable of eloquently and fluently expressing the joys and fears of daily life, talking about their hopes and sorrows, recounting the events and happenings of their informal, intimate environments and telling stories and anecdotes. This is often a fundamental basis for developing more formal and sophisticated language

21. We refer to conversations between citizens and municipal officials or staff, not a specific written action by the few employees that work there. Although it has rarely become the overriding norm, it should be noted that in practice, written administrative work in Basque is gaining ground in various areas.

22. In healthy language communities, these everyday interactions take place, entirely or primarily, orally rather than in writing.

23. It is another matter entirely to claim that something existed once (sometimes not so long ago) and that we want to make sure it exists again in the future. We Basque enthusiasts have every right to pursue our dream, but it is 'something else entirely'. The Spanish-speaking world immediately recognises the difference between the two.

24. Regarding "incidental" Basque-language promotion, see also Zalvide 2007.

skills. It is not surprising, therefore, that many Basque professionals (either themselves or their parents) come from breathing spaces. Even though most of these professionals have gone out into the world, having grown up in a breathing space is hugely helpful for them when it comes to using the Basque language with ease, agility and elegance. Breathing spaces are a breeding ground for eloquent Basque-speakers. And this is a highly prized ‘treasure’ for a language community whose language is seriously weakened²⁵.

- e) Basque is the predominant language of communication in Basque breathing spaces. Spanish also has its place (it is losing ground in schools, but gaining ground in the workplace, tourism, audiovisual content, etc.). But although Spanish is increasingly present, Basque remains the normal language of communication in everyday interactions. It is either the sole language used, ‘lord and master’ or, more and more often, just predominant. But be careful: the term ‘just predominant’ may be misleading; it means that, at the local or regional level, Basque is the predominant language of everyday communications. **But it is only predominant in that specific field.**
- f) In the child-youth-adult chain, which extends from birth to around 35-40 years of age, the shift from Basque to Spanish is not occurring to any great extent in Basque breathing spaces. Barring mass migrations or other serious disruptions, intergenerational transmission is assured in breathing spaces.

In short, at the collective level, breathing spaces are closer to a healthy state than any other geo-territorial environment or population segment. In them, Basque is not in perfect health, but it is certainly healthier than anywhere else. That is why it is so vital, why it is so important and indispensable to maintain this predominance of the Basque language in the breathing spaces as much as possible. A weakened language community can recover; a dead one cannot. At most a dead community can be revived, never revitalised. Bringing something that has died back to life in the everyday language of speakers is much harder than revitalising what is weakened.

25. Although other foreign experts (Weinreich 1953, Gal 1979 and 1995; Riehl 2006; Knipf-Komlósi 2011, etc.) are also worthy of consideration, we believe it is worth carefully examining the research carried out by Nancy Dorian, as it provides insight into the extent and nature of this ‘treasure’: see Dorian 1981, 1992 [1989], 2010, and 2014. And closer to home, see again Seber Altube (Altube 1920, 1929–1930, 1933, and 1936). For a deeper understanding of Altube’s contribution, see, among others, Josemari Velez de Mendizabal (1979 and 2000).

This is nothing new. We are basically repeating what many experts, from both abroad and within our community, have said before. Let us briefly examine what these experts (those we deem most representative) have said on this matter.

What experts from home and abroad have to say about the importance of breathing spaces

Experts from both home and abroad have attempted to answer the following questions: 1) For a weakened language to ‘recover’ its strength, what is needed above all? 2) If, in a language community, only a few speakers continue to transmit their language from generation to generation, where should one begin to rebuild that community? Let us take these questions in turn.

- 1) *For a weakened language to ‘recover’ its strength, what is needed above all?* This question has been answered in many different ways²⁶ (for a brief overview of these answers, see, for example, Zalbide [2002]). In order to explore the fundamental aspects of this diversity, we will focus here on two experts, one from abroad and one from closer to home. They are by no means the only ones. They are, however, two authors who have spoken clearly and forcefully about the main elements that should be considered when attempting to revitalise a weakened language and who, in general, have served as a benchmark for many other experts. In terms of explanations provided by those outside the Basque Country, we refer to the words of Joshua A. Fishman; in terms of explanations provided from those closer to home, we refer to Seber Altube.

In relation to priority fields, in *Reversing Language Shift*, Joshua A. Fishman repeatedly claims the following: ‘the fulcrum of the GIDS scale is commonly²⁷ stage 6’ (Fishman, 2001, p. 467). We know what ‘Stage 6’ is: ‘The intergenerational and demographically concentrated home-family-neighbourhood-community: the basis of mother-tongue transmission’

26. One possible answer is, undoubtedly, the one referred to by Altube in 1933:

‘A good Basque patriot (...) once said in a rant what I transcribe below: «Give me my freedom, however little Basque there is in it, and in a few years, Basque will become strong, sturdy, resilient, alive. And do you know what is needed to work this miracle? A dictionary and a Basque grammar». This idea has deep roots; see, for example, the passage with gaps in that Sabino Arana read in Hendaye in 1901 (Zalbide et al., 2003: XVI-XIX). It is evident that it was Sabino himself who, on that very day, asserted the need to propose a feasible alternative given the infeasibility of that path. Knipf-Komlósi, Elisabeth, 2011: ‘Wandel im Wortschatz der Minderheitensprache. Am Beispiel des Deutschen in Ungarn’. *Zeitschrift für Dialektologie und Linguistik* – Beihefte (ZDL-B) Band 145. Budapest.

27. The term *commonly* refers to the most frequent actions necessary for improving the social situation of weakened languages. Fishman clearly states that the aforementioned ‘fulcrum’ may be different ‘for particular languages vis-à-vis particular functions that are being targeted in particular cases.’ (Fishman, 2001, p. 467)

(Fishman, 2001, p. 467). In other words, Basque must be the predominant language in the home and family, in the local neighbourhood and on the street, in social activities and in the broader life of the town or village, used by both the elderly and the young in their everyday interactions. In the case of weakened language communities such as ours, ensuring these fields of action is the fulcrum on which all else depends.

Looking to our specific situation, what is needed for Basque to recover and flourish? Seber Altube answered this question some ninety years ago by examining, analysing and developing²⁸ the views of several of his or his predecessors' contemporaries: 'For a language to recover, it is necessary that a compact and fairly numerous population use it fully as their own intimate and native tongue. A spoken language mainly spreads through natural expansion based on oral transmission (today it is also necessary for it to be supported by artificial or educational means), which necessarily requires the existence, we repeat, of centres or hubs of a certain size and compact formation (...) in which the language lives and reaches its full, vibrant and deeply rooted potential.' (Altube, 1936, p. 73) (Our italics. For a summary of his ideas, see Zalbide, 2016). Earlier, in the preamble to the passage cited above, Altube states the following: 'Speaking the language as the language of the family is (...) the most effective or decisive way of ensuring all members learn it perfectly; this learning is then complemented and consolidated by daily use in the streets, squares and other meeting places, among people from the same town who speak the same language' (Altube, 1933, p. 305).

Clearly, Altube and Fishman were on the same page²⁹. There is one clear chronological difference between them, however: S. Altube outlined his theory almost 60 years before J. A. Fishman (and S. Arana did so twenty-odd years before him). One day we will have to address the issue of pre-war language sociology head-on³⁰ to properly assess the lights and shadows of Basque-language activism as they deserve and determine where they fit into the literature from an international perspective.

- 2) *If, in a language community, only a few speakers continue to transmit their language from generation to generation, where should one begin to rebuild that community?*

28. Meanwhile, although it is often forgotten, Sabino Arana also delivered a powerful address in Hendaye in 1901. Some of his ideas are worth analysing. See Zalbide, 2015.

29. Not only in relation to this issue. But that is a topic for another time.

30. Attempts have been made to do this. See, for example, José Manuel Odriozola's *Gerraurreko gizarte-hizkuntzalaritza*, published in 1992.

Should the revitalisation effort focus more on the increasingly numerous groups of speakers (and the environments in which they live) who have turned away from their former practice and shifted to Spanish, or on the more compact (and increasingly smaller) groups of speakers who speak Basque in their everyday lives? Obviously, the best thing to do would be to work on 'all fronts at the same time' (if possible), using whichever method is deemed most appropriate in each situation. To the best of our knowledge, no one would disagree with this 'all out' approach. However, priorities are paramount in any human endeavour, be it individual or collective: 'Do not bite off more than you can chew' is the golden rule everywhere. In other words, we are often forced to choose a specific path, simply because we cannot do everything we would like. And when it is impossible to do everything, saying 'everything is good' is as useless as it is short-sighted. Knowing this, how should we define the priorities for the Basque revitalisation process? When we cannot do 'everything' we would like for a weakened language, where should our efforts be focused?

Joshua A. Fishman says the following³¹:

An early **start before inter-generational mother-tongue transmission has ceased** to occur is worth more than tons of sage advice. **It is better and easier to foster informal life when it still exists. It is the hardest thing to create afterwards.** It is very hard to create, to program that which is essentially not programmed or programmable. At best, you can program situations that might facilitate it (Fishman, 2007 [1996]).

(Bold type added by us).

In short, without undervaluing or denying the importance of other revitalisation actions, the most effective endeavour, according to Fishman, is to work to keep the living alive. 'It is better and easier.'

What does Altube have to say about this? Here is his explanation:

It will be necessary to ensure, with **paramount** concern, **the preservation** (...) **of the** sacred fire of **Basque in populations of a certain size** in which **it still remains alive**, since they constitute the last bastions of defence, the last foundations for a possible future expansion (Altube, 1936, p. 73 [translation by the editors]).

(Bold type added by us).

31. This is not the first time Fishman addressed this topic directly. However, due to its brevity and clarity, it is a good choice here.

There are many differences and nuances between these two points of view, of course³². But the fundamental ideas are very similar: it is best to start with a compact group of active Basque speakers who express themselves in Basque in their everyday interactions. And today, the strongest and most vibrant geo-territorial environments within Fishman's 'intergenerational and demographically concentrated home-family-neighbourhood-community' sphere of action are breathing spaces, since only here do we find (wholly or predominantly) Altube's 'compact population (...) (who) use it fully as their own intimate and native tongue.' Therefore, according to both Fishman and Altube, breathing spaces should be a clear priority in the Basque language revitalisation effort.

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32. Altube's 'populations of a certain size' should not be dismissed outright, but nor should it be taken out of proportion. The situation regarding normal, everyday use of Basque has worsened notably since 1933–36, and we should avoid imposing restrictions of this kind on breathing spaces, since if we did, we would be left only with Azeitia. Furthermore, who said that the Basque spoken every day in the smallest villages is less important, of less value, than the Basque spoken on the streets of Azeitia? Demolinguistics is always important: If we had a dozen or so Azeitia-type breathing spaces today, then Basque would be a thousand times healthier. But we do not; we do not have even half a dozen. But even if we take demolinguistics fully into account, dwelling on what we lack will not get us anywhere.

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3. Protecting Vernacular Communities in Minority Language Revitalisation: A social dynamic analysis

Conchúr Ó Giollagáin (University of the Highlands and Islands)

Abstract: This paper sets out an approach to ethnolinguistic vitality (EV) that aims to generate mutual benefits for L1 speaker communities, L2 networks and L2 learners in a reinforcing cycle for language group sustainability. This new conceptualisation of EV builds on the comprehensive reality-based framework, which we call Language Dynamics in Society (LanDS: Ó Giollagáin et al. 2025) for understanding how languages live in societies, or for describing ethnolinguistic sustainability and the sociolinguistic crisis threatening global language diversity. Academic and official approaches in recent decades to language promotion have been an obstacle to minority-language vernacular community protection. Much of contemporary language policy and planning simply ignores or is in denial about the ubiquitous societal decline of minority vernacular communities. In response to their demise, this paper sets out: a) a new theoretical framework by which we can interpret the minority-language societal condition and, b) to inform strategic approaches to minority-language promotion with sufficient vernacular community protection, i.e. to develop socially meaningful language revitalisation. This new conceptualisation of EV reassesses minority-language sustainability from an interactional social dynamic framework. EV from this perspective entails four foundational developmental stages: 1) primary socialisation; 2) secondary socialisation; 3) civic reinforcement; and 4) coherent ethnicisation, i.e. socio-political processes leading to coherence in perceptions of collective identity. Progression individually and collectively through these stages is key to a language community's capacity to develop and bolster its societal sustainability. Successful language policy is dependent, therefore, on the cultural, political and institutional ability of a language group to align strategies with pressures of societal change, interactional processes, and social dynamics which are foundational to a language group's EV.

Keywords: Ethnolinguistic vitality, language protection, LanDS framework, language socialisation, language reinforcement, coherent ethnicisation, language revitalisation, minority vernacular sociolinguistics

Introduction

The Arnasgunea refocus on the societal circumstances of minority vernacular communities is a welcome development. Encouraging a focus on the societal dimensions of Ethnolinguistic Vitality (EV) is a much-needed first step to reinstitute the prioritisation of vernacular concerns in minority-language policy and planning (Min-LPP). This necessitates an approach to EV that will generate mutual benefits for L1 speaker communities, L2 networks and L2 learners in a mutually reinforcing and sustainable cycle for language group sustainability. From a sociological and political perspective, minority-language civic and community aspirations which are insufficiently rooted in such a holistic approach to the minority ethnolinguistic concerns cannot be considered credible as societal Min-LPP. Thus, credible minority-language promotion starts with protecting the social habitat of vernacular, native-minority-language (Min-L) speaking communities. It is by reinforcing the social-geographic contexts of the day-to-day practice of minority languages, and their lived social culture, that minority-language promotion with vernacular community protection can evolve as dynamic and «socio-functional» Min-LPP (cf. Fishman, 2001, p. 673).

Our Language Dynamics in Society (LanDS, Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2025)¹ approach to EV is our attempt to reset the LPP agenda and to focus attention on complex societal dynamics which can either have a positive effect on language communities resulting in ethnolinguistic sustainability or a detrimental effect leading to ethnolinguistic fragility. We have argued that: ‘EV ensues from the collective and organisational capacity of a language group to protect and regenerate key intergenerational, communal/social, institutional and civic processes which are critical to the societal stability and continuity of the group’ (Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2025, p. 26).

We present LanDS as a successor to the well-known Reversing Language Shift paradigm of the acclaimed founder of modern language policy and planning, Joshua Fishman (1991). The importance of the LanDS framework is that it builds on Fishman’s seminal contributions to sustaining EV from the 1960s to the 2000s.

LanDS represents both a significant reconceptualisation of EV and an analytical component of this refocus on the challenges of sustaining higher density vernacular L1 minority communities. The origins of this vernacular refocus date

1. Significant sections of this article are based on the original LanDS paper (Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2025: <https://sciendo.com/article/10.2478/tajes-2025-0002>). The LanDS project research team includes Conchúr Ó Giollagáin, Daniel Bourgeois, Brian Ó Curnáin, Iain Caimbeul and Gordon Cameron. Our original article contains a literature review of EV frameworks.

back to the *Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the Gaeltacht* (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007), updated in 2015 (Ó Giollagáin and Charlton, 2015). The Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007, 2015 methodology was then adapted to the *Gaelic Crisis in the Vernacular Community* survey in Scotland (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2020). The Irish and Scottish Gaelic sociolinguistic approach (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007, 2015, 2020) was then adapted to the Welsh vernacular context, and this resulted in the establishment of the BRO² sociolinguistic collaboration (2023–2027) to survey the Welsh vernacular areas. Subsequently, the intercultural dialogue on Min-L vernacular concerns between the Irish and Scottish Gaelic world and Wales created the cross-cultural sociolinguistic perspective for the establishment of the Arnasgunea project in the Basque Country (2025).

Holistic Approaches to Min-LPP

Proposing comprehensiveness and complementarity in LPP, as set out in the holistic LanDS approach, represents an antidote to some of the evasiveness about vernacular vulnerability in some current LPP (e.g. The 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language; Acht na Gaeltachta, 2012; The Scottish Languages Act, 2025; implementation of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (ECRML) assessment criteria). Prescribing for holistic EV will also necessitate moving beyond the analytically underproductive post-structuralist and established discourses which have deflected attention from minority vernacular concerns, such as:

- Minority identitarian issues in postmodernist diversity, hybridity and fluidity (e.g. Blommaert, 2010).
- Composition of minority speakerhood, including New-speakerism (e.g. Smith-Christmas et al., 2018).
- Translanguaging (e.g. García & Wei, 2014).
- Linguistic landscapes (e.g. Gorter, 2006).
- Sectoral management of Min-LPP (e.g. Williams, 2023; Spolsky, 2009)³.

2. Cf. BRO: A Comprehensive Sociolinguistic Survey of Contemporary Welsh-speaking Communities | University of Wales and https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-08/Prosiect%20BRO%20Compendium%20of%20Language%20Statistics%20based%20on%20Census%202021%20data_0.pdf (accessed 29/9/2025).

3. The preferment of the sectoralist approach (in sectors of education, media, arts, and in public administration) to minority LPP (in western contexts) has been to the advantage of an intermediary state class and has led to formal dispensations for post-structuralist language promotion which do not adequately align with pressures of societal change, interactional processes, social dynamics which are foundational to a language group's ethnolinguistic vitality.

- The imbalanced focus on the philology of Min-Ls in academia to the detriment of a systematic approach in research entities to the sociological, anthropological, political and sociolinguistic issues facing many threatened minority groups⁴.

These discourses could be categorised as Symbolic Min-LPP, as opposed to more relevant and required Societal Min-LPP. Indeed, the prospects for averting the societal collapse of minority-language cultures now lie in the collective capacity and resources of those minority groups to devise and implement Societal Min-LPP aimed at achieving social habitat protection and holistically designed EV strategies. By definition, Symbolic Min-LPP is only likely to produce symbolic or institutional outcomes, i.e. non-societal results from promotional efforts. Therefore, the focus in Societal LPP on realistic social science can be differentiated from much of the aspirational individualistic sentiment which often typifies Symbolic Min-LPP and the academic discourses which legitimise it.

We may also need to consider if the policy and academic focus on the implementation of provisions of the ECRML has distracted attention from a broader societal perspective on LPP, such as the familial and societal transfer of Min-Ls and the degree to which Min-Ls are prevalent in a broad range of social domains and functions. In recent years, we have grown accustomed to languages being positively assessed under ECRML criteria for Min-Ls with little or no social vibrancy⁵. This tick-box approach to assessing Min-L vitality according to the Charter's recognised sectoral realms will ultimately undermine the sociolinguistic credibility of the ECRML. As it is hard to recognise the day-to-day real-world struggles of being a Scottish Gaelic speaker in the latest Council of Europe's assessment of Scottish Gaelic, the process has become confounded by a not-seeing-the-wood-for-the-trees problem. From this viewpoint, ECRML processes appear to monitor a service agreement rather than assessing vital issues of sustaining the viability of differentiated ethnolinguistic groups. Viewed from the Min-L societal perspective, the analysis here contends that established sectoralist LPP dispensations have generated a de-societalised approach to the concerns of vulnerable vernacular communities, as policy affairs do not adequately correspond to core aspects of the actual reality of minority social dynamics.

4. Ó Giollagáin (forthcoming) discusses this syndrome in relation to Irish-language scholarship and academia.

5. See the Council of Europe's (2024) latest UK positive assessment of the ECRML indicators for Scottish Gaelic despite the clear societal evidence of the social disintegration of remaining Gaelic vernacular communities (Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2020), cf. <https://rm.coe.int/united-kingdomecrml6-en/1680b1a73f>

Fishman (2001, p. 673) warned that:

‘[t]he problem with ... theoretically innocent explanatory attempts is that they do not spell out or relate to societal processes, whether of intra-group interaction or inter-group interaction, that is, they are basically neither sociological (and, therefore, not sociolinguistic) nor are they related to any body of disciplined inquiry or application’.

This begs the question why the vernacular challenges of European language minorities have not received adequate attention over recent decades. Learning from the Gaelic world of Ireland and Scotland, we observe how the critical issues of language attrition and the societal contraction of the Gaelic vernacular communities in the Gaeltacht/Gàidhealtachd has been simply ignored or largely evaded in both academic and policy circles (cf. Ó Giollagáin and Ó Curnáin, 2024, Ó Giollagáin, 2025, and Ó Giollagáin, forthcoming). However, from a broader sociolinguistic point of view, it is also worth enquiring if some recent sociolinguistic discourses have contributed to the deprioritisation of vernacular concerns in minority-language promotion. Especially since the identitarian turn in LPP (termed by Oakes, 2024, p. 40 as the «ethnographic turn») of the late 1990s and early 2000s (e.g. Heller, 1999, 2011), some LPP discourses have focused on the individualised experience of Min-L cultures to the neglect of broader overarching socio-political and societal dimensions of sustaining Min-L collectives.

We have argued previously that much of current minority-language policy and planning (Min-LPP) can be characterised as language promotion without sufficient emphasis on language community protection (cf. Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2025, Ó Curnáin and Ó Giollagáin, 2024, and Ó Giollagáin and Caimbeul, 2021). Arriving at this situation of language promotion without vernacular protection indicates that current LPP has drifted significantly and detrimentally from the seminal language-in-society focus as originally set out in particular by Fishman (1964, 1989, 1991, 2001).

Enquiring how this happened could help inform approaches to getting LPP back on a societal, post-neoliberal track. This drift can partially be explained by the proliferation of fashionable identitarian discourses (cf. Grin, 2018) which were articulated alongside a growing sectoralist focus in officially sanctioned Min-L promotion. The combined effect of identitarian Min-L politics with the circumscribed sectoralist focus propagated an approach to Min-LPP which was to contradictorily enable a neo-liberal *laissez-faire* outlook detrimental to minority vernacular groups already in demolinguistic decline.

Fishman's (1989, 1991) socio-political approach to Min-LPP, characterised as a strategic combination of Language Maintenance (entailing intergenerational language transmission with socio-functional language maintenance strategies) with Language Revitalisation (entailing measures for reversing language shift), was overshadowed by analytically weaker descriptions and diagnostics of the Min-L condition. Weaker analytical diagnostics significantly precluded more productive prescriptions for informing LPP. Fishman emphasised the centrality of:

- Min-L transmission and intergenerational continuity
- Social planning and inter- and intra-group political developments
- Regional Min-L politics focused on community and socio-economic development for the vernacular group.

While also prescribing for the:

- Parallel focus on L2 acquisition and networks
- Cultural and technological innovations for the Min-L
- Acquisition planning in schooling and minority-medium education
- Institutional and symbolic minority politics in the broader majority-dominated polity.

The discursivist and policy drift away from the Fishmanian language-in-society approach was eventually to culminate in language planning being constrained by a restricted version of Min-L language promotion. What was initiated as a broad socio-political ambition descended in many Min-L contexts into a narrower and weaker social policy sphere. This constrained version of LPP was sufficient to generate Min-L civic activity and bureaucratic box ticking, but inadequate as a meaningful guiding force for Min-L politics to sustain EV. Put simply, the jettisoning of Fishmanian concepts resulted in language planning becoming symbolic language promotion. Symbolic Min-LPP, restricted to civic sectoral initiatives, proved to be bureaucratically convenient to the Min-L power class while also politically expedient. Its lack of societal and political ambition decreased the likelihood of Min-L promotion provoking majoritarian intolerance against the expenditure and attention on Min-L sectoral provision⁶. Symbolic Min-LPP's non-contentiousness rendered it safe for the majority and societally irrelevant to the minority at the same time.

6. For instance, the costs associated with the *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language* have not generated a negative majoritarian reaction in Ireland, despite little or no evidence of the Strategy generating any bang-for-buck in society from the expenditure.

This constrained, less ambitious approach to Min-LPP increasingly restricted its focus to:

- Status and corpus planning, i.e. resource planning rather than community-focused LPP
- Increasing the symbolic profile of Min-L language promotion bodies
- Sectoral expansion and financing for Min-L initiatives in education, media, arts, academia and technological innovation
- Articulating a perspective on Min-L revitalisation which prioritised L2 concerns, entailing equating the promotion of Min-Ls as a second language with minority revitalisation, and establishing L2 revivalism as the dominant Min-L discourse.

The dominance of the L2 perspective has contributed to:

- The lack of strategic focus on difficulties in maintaining transmission in areas of higher social densities of Min-L speakers
- Language politics not being sufficiently agile to adapt to socio-economic, societal and technological transformations, in that Min-L discursivism crowded out the more necessary sociological focus on Min-L fragility in (post-)modernity
- A neo-liberal, laissez-faire response to difficult Min-L social issues.

In the Min-L contexts with an L2-dominated neo-liberal focus, faux or pseudo-Min-LPP has emerged. This pseudo aspect can be observed in the political, academic and official obfuscation of vernacular L1 decline in how L2-dominated language politics is conducted⁷. In evading societal challenges, L2 Min-L politics becomes reliant on a discursivist agenda, similar to a set of religious tropes, whereby revivalist ambitions can be asserted by reference to institutionally driven cultural, symbolic and pedagogical initiatives. Similarly, as the socio-economic market supporting the minority contracts in parallel to vernacular demolinguistic demise, Min-L activism becomes increasingly reliant on the official civic apparatus for the Min-L promotion (cf. Cameron, 2012). This form of state-sponsored activism can easily become a form of embedded activism by which a limited number of institutionally inspired discourses are safer and less controversial to articulate than the real-world concerns of sustaining a viable language minority in society. A corollary of this embedded activism can be found in how Min-L academia engages

7. See the debate that arose following the publication of Ó Giollagáin et al. 2020 in: Nance, 2021, and McLeod et al., 2022; and for responses, see: Ó Giollagáin et al., 2022a,b; Ó Curnáin & Ó Giollagáin, 2021.

with contemporary Min-L societal reality. The common philological and aesthetic approach to Min-L scholarship, especially when practiced and developed in a dissociated relationship to societal challenges is often perceived as an academicist pursuit with limited intellectual relevance or empathy for those who live with the day-to-day socio-political struggles of the remaining minority civilisation.

From a Fishmanian perspective, the imbalanced focus on L2 concerns contributed to a disregard of strategic requirements of L1 maintenance. This strategic vacuum created the conditions for weak sociological and political thinking about the deteriorating situation in vernacular communities and, ultimately to the proliferation of weakly relevant Min-L politics about pressing societal issues. In addition to the expedient focus on L2 concerns and the majority's symbolic requirements of the Min-L, the factors leading to the obfuscation of the societal instability in L1 communities can be largely explained by the tacit agreement among activists and academics, in ideological coalition with state officials, to focus on expanding the institutional and symbolic engagement with the Min-L within the dominant majority culture. While this approach conveniently enhanced the tolerability of Min-L institutions within the broader majority civic apparatus, it served also to ignore or obscure potential embarrassment about L1 demise, despite Min-LPP assertions to the contrary. From this perspective, much of Min-LPP is contributing inadvertently to reproducing the social and political conditions driving L1 vernacular decline, contradicting LPP's revivalist aspirations to mitigate Min-L threat and instability.

As it is often the case, the Min-L power class may live in a social milieu that does not have to contend with the daily experience of living in the vernacular context where L1 decline occurs (cf. Ó Giollagáin & Ó Curnáin, 2024; Ó Giollagáin forthcoming, 2025; and Ó Giollagáin forthcoming). They are naturally less inclined, therefore, to challenge the conceptual narrowness of institutionally focused minority politics. In not experiencing the raw socio-politics of a declining vernacular minority, the avoidance of Min-L societal reality via the path dependency in Min-L civic promotion conforms with the Min-L realpolitik of operating within the confines of the institutional provision allocated to them, but not in a way that inconveniences majority socio-political hegemony. In short, from the vernacular perspective, the civic limitations of institutional Min-L politics do not equate with social politics. This helps explain why the minority may feel that they are being led by a confused political, institutional leadership which primarily serves the majority's symbolic attachment to the cultural diversity to which the minority culture contributes.

LanDS as a Conceptual Framework

The Language Dynamics in Society framework (Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2025, LanDS), posits that Ethnolinguistic Vitality (EV) is contingent on language dynamics functioning according to inter-related and mutually reinforcing societal processes. The LanDS approach sets out a theory of EV based on the multifaceted societal interactions which determine a minority group's collective continuity, instability or decline. In the current context of ubiquitous Min-L vernacular demise (Crystal, 2000; Harrison, 2007; Bradley & Bradley, 2019), comprehending the social dynamics which may culminate in ethnolinguistic shift is an analytical prerequisite in describing, explaining and prescribing collective, institutional or state initiatives to seek to arrest or reverse the destabilising demolinguiistic trajectory. LanDS interdisciplinary analysis focuses on the communal/social dynamics within a minority group as well as between the minority and the majority (and other groups). These dynamics frame individual and communal ethnolinguistic behaviour and social psychology.

The global loss of cultural and linguistic diversity requires a holistic focus similar to the global response to the ecological crisis. Our newly published LanDS paper presenting a comprehensive reality-based framework for understanding how languages live in societies, or more technically describing ethnolinguistic sustainability and the sociolinguistic crisis threatening the world's linguistic diversity.

The concept of habitat protection in environmental sciences is central to addressing the threat of ecological collapse. Language cultures require a similar approach to counter the collapse of linguistic diversity. The loss of a language community's capacity to regenerate itself is the sociolinguistic equivalent of habitat loss. Minority culture endangerment has reached a tipping point globally. As mega-languages expand with the full force of technological revolution behind them, and as many small languages are being eroded, we are now, in evolutionary terms, in a sociolinguistic era of the 'survival of the biggest'. In current circumstances, the rate of loss of linguistic habitats is comparatively greater than that of the depletion in biodiversity. LanDS proposes a methodology to analyse these dynamics in modern societies.

Greenpeace is widely known but few will have heard of the Foundation for Endangered Languages, for instance. The level of public awareness about the global ecological crisis is significantly greater than knowledge about sociolinguistic endangerment. Obviously, if language diversity is basically a non-

issue for the majority, the loss of speaker habitats will, for the majority, also be a non-issue. This creates a lack of understanding about how to sustain linguistic diversity. At the same time, many in those majority cultures enjoy aspects of minority-language aesthetics and culture without concerning themselves with the sustainability of the minority cultures in their traditional habitats. In contrast to the many national and international bodies advising on issues of public health, environmentalism and economics, there are no high-profile corresponding agencies addressing the threats to global linguistic diversity. Until now there is no sophisticated, relevant strategic plan or agenda to tackle widespread language endangerment.

Unlike some of the more-informed public debates about ecological diversity, linguistic diversity is often discussed at naïve or less than rigorous levels. Therefore, minority-language debates and promotion efforts often lack intellectual substance and coherence, reducing the possibility of much-needed realism.

Maintaining a language group means sustaining the group as a living social reality. This axiomatic dynamic of bio-social regeneration is central to our new holistic framework for understanding and engaging with ethnolinguistic sustainability. Based on language transmission as an intergenerational cycle, our framework presents these Language Dynamics as four Quadrants in a feedback loop. The intergenerational cycle follows the progression of individuals and age cohorts through life, as people mature and they develop their language skills through these four key reinforcing Quadrants: 1) children's early years (which we term Language Transmission and Acquisition) e.g. primary carers interacting in the group's language with children; 2) later childhood (Socialisation and Reinforced Acquisition) e.g. older children socialising with each other in their language; 3) adulthood (Civic Expansion) e.g. cooperation between adults in their language in forming social and economic opportunities in their community; and 4) broader society (Coherent Ethnicisation, including Civic Politics) e.g. members of the group identifying with the group and participating politically to sustain the viability of their group. As the individual and age cohorts go through the Quadrants, they mature and create the society upon which the subsequent generation is based, and thus the next generation enters Quadrant 1, and so the cycle evolves and reproduces contexts for sustainability.

These four interconnected and interdependent stages are mutually reinforcing in a sustainable cycle. Children acquire language culture(s) (Quadrant 1) and they practice these with others as they mature (Quadrant 2). People practice culture with others and form associations, both intimate and civic,

which can reinforce their language culture(s) (Quadrant 3). These interactions of the individual with their group(s) and associations form the basis of their collective identity and politics (Quadrant 4). Therefore, the psycho-developmental progression through Quadrants 1 to 4 encapsulates the experiences of the young individual, families, communities, society, their interaction with education, and civic, socio-economic, as well as political life. This represents the foundational core to the holistic LanDS framework.

The Quadrants are influenced by the pervasive presence of four underlying General Tenets which influence all aspects of the life of language groups. These Tenets are: 1) Direction (i.e. multi-dimensional individual and group progression within and through generations); 2) Process (i.e. the inter-related dynamics of individual maturation and group sustainability, as well as collective reinforcement); 3) Participation (i.e. how people connect to and participate in the deeply social aspects of sociolinguistic life); and finally 4) Competition (i.e. the competitive nature of how individuals and language groups relate to their language(s) and culture(s)) and apply their personal and collective resources to these contexts. These Tenets reflect four key interconnected psycho-social, demographic and sociolinguistic realities. They encapsulate the bio-social processes through time, or in other words the chronological progression of individuals and groups, participating in both cooperative and competitive cultural, social, economic and political dynamics.

There is a particular political relevance to Tenet 4 in the context of the previously mentioned ubiquitous endangerment to language groups. The overarching competitiveness within and between individuals and language polities is emphasised in our framework. Tenet 4 takes into account globalised competitive dynamics, including cultural and economic opportunity costs for the minority, underlining the level of threat to the current and future sustainability of worldwide ethnolinguistic vitality. The power and unprecedented speed of change can increase the competitive advantages of dominant languages.

We expand on the operation of the four General Tenets in the Developmental Quadrants in more detail below. LanDS is a holistic diagnostic framework as it is based on the concepts of comprehensiveness, complexity and complementarity. It emphasises the important concept of the (minority) collective group and the individual's position in that collective. Post-structuralists with their individualised view of language groups, have regrettably shied away from this key concept. Put simply, if the (minority) collective is not sustained today there obviously will be no significant cohort of (minority) speakers tomorrow.

Current approaches commonly overemphasise Quadrant 3 (Civic Expansion) over the others, and in particular the symbolic use of a minority language or its civic promotion. This precludes the holistic approach of the LanDS framework. Similarly, current minority-language promotion often ignores the need for focusing on the full scope of demolinguistic realities as encapsulated in the four Tenets of LanDS: Direction, Process, Participation and Competition. For example, the common overemphasis on teaching minority languages in isolation from real-world issues risks ignoring the importance of community transmission.

As an antidote to the limitations of most current approaches, our LanDS framework will assist language groups to move beyond the status quo and the naïve symbolism of linguistic difference. LanDS sets out a reality-based and holistic framework for language promotion and for the protection of linguistic diversity.

General Tenets in Minority Social Dynamics of Direction; Process; Participation and Competition in Developmental Quadrants

These four General Tenets (GTs) of Direction; Process; Participation and Competition are of central relevance in each of the four Developmental Quadrants (DQs). Ideally, the four DQs entail a progressive movement from one stage to the next, while the internal dynamic in each DQ is affected by these four GTs. The overarching crucial concept of comprehensiveness in sustainable EV, Language Protection and Promotion (LPrPr) and LPP (Ó Curnáin and Ó Giollagáin 2024: 412) entails all these GTs and DQs in dynamic complementary interaction. The four GTs are ever-present influences on the structured and inter-related dynamics of LanDS EV. These DQs can be viewed as sequential stages for the individual, as well as spheres of action, participation and development for the ethnolinguistic group.

Direction

The concept of direction in minority social dynamics in Figure 1⁸ can be viewed as operating on two directional axes. Firstly, there is a vertical axis indicating the social transfer of the Min-L between generations, including the transmission of the social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2017: 183-184) associated with the language. The key component, therefore, on the Y-axis

8. The LanDS authors are grateful to Nóirín Ní Ghiollagáin for her design work on preparing the LanDS conceptual diagrams (Figures 1-4).

(Figure 1) is the transfer of language skills and its associated culture from the previous generation(s) to the young. Figure 1 below illustrates this as a vertical trajectory from the primary transfer of the Min-L entailing stages in social DQ1-2 to socialised transfer pertaining also to institutional/formal DQ3-4; as socialised transfer is a continuation from primary transfer of intergenerational transmission on the vertical axis. Critical-period bilingual acquisition can clearly occur outside the home or primary socialisation, for instance in Min-L preschools where Maj-L children can acquire the Min-L.

Figure 1 depicts the four Developmental Quadrants in the sustainable inter-generational social dynamic:

Developmental Quadrant 1 – Transmission and Acquisition of the Language

Developmental Quadrant 2 – Socialisation and Reinforced Acquisition of the Language

Developmental Quadrant 3 – Civic, Socio-economic and Institutional Elaboration

Developmental Quadrant 4 – Coherent Ethnicisation.

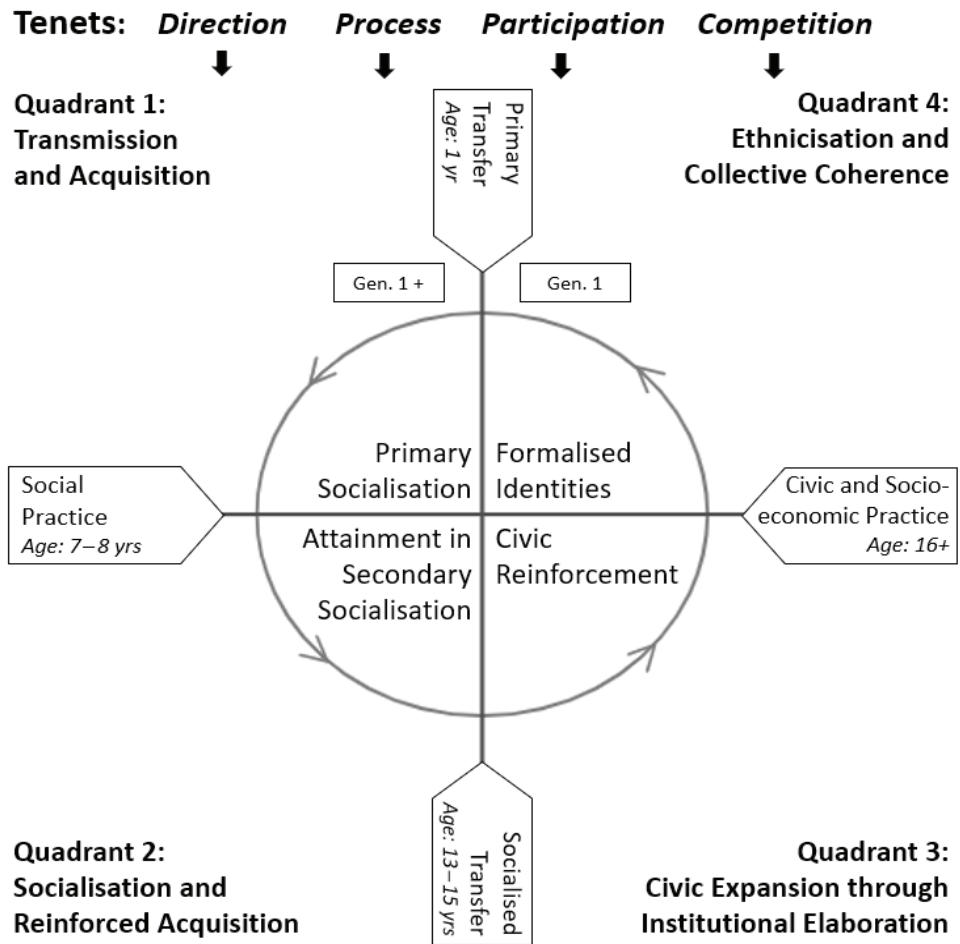


Figure 1: Four Developmental Quadrants of Sustainable EV in Language Community Dynamics.

The directional arrows of the circular dynamics in Figure 1 represent sustainable EV flows through the four DQs. Direction in the dynamic can also be observed as operating on a horizontal axis, i.e. the practice of Min-L and culture in various (inter-)generational social and geographic settings. This would include Min-L practice in communities, schools, civic institutions and promotional sectors. Figure 1 above illustrates this as a horizontal trajectory from the Social Practice of language entailed in DQ1-2 to Civic and Socio-economic Practice pertaining to DQ3-4 institutional/formal processes, operating on a monodirectional micro- to macro-context trajectory, as Civic and Socio-economic Practice and positive identity formation is preceded by the more informal Social

Practice in the vernacular social context. The widening DQ stages portrayed in the LanDS framework involves expanding networks of communities of practice, encompassing the dynamic progress from the more micro to societally expansive macrocontexts.

Process

The concept of Process pertains to the social dynamic of moving progressively within, through and from one social or developmental stage to another. In this societal dynamic framework, the progression through four DQs indicates the optimal adherence to the developments leading to optimal societal sustainability. There is a historical dimension to both the Direction and Process Tenets due to the important factors of the cyclical transfer of culture and language between the generations, i.e. the accumulated cultural legacy of a speaker group over time. In these contexts, we can now discuss the four DQs.

Quadrant 1: Transmission. This pertains to the critical-period acquisition of the Min-L and culture through their transmission in the family or primary care context in which the initial processes of primary socialisation occur and embodied socio-cultural competences initially develop (Clark, 2009; Montrul, 2008; Péterváry *et al.*, 2014; Benmanoun *et al.*, 2013).

Quadrant 2: Socialisation. This involves the maturational and social reinforcement in youth or peer-group practice of the Min-L and culture, following primary transmission in DQ1 (cf. Hasan, 1988). This social reinforcement emerges from communal contexts in which the minority group has the capacity to generate sufficient social densities of young people who have previously experienced primary socialisation. This is the Process by which young people become socialised into their minority peer group beyond the home/family context. From this perspective, DQ2 can be portrayed as minority secondary socialisation.

Quadrant 3: Civic and Socio-economic Expansion. This emerges from the civic reinforcement of the Min-L practice in schools, collective organisations, civic institutions and other public bodies or fora. Spheres of employment and socio-economic mobility take place in DQ3. Partner selection and family/household formation occur within DQ3. These processes serve to reinforce formally or institutionally that which has been previously experienced in intimate, informal and non-programmed (Calvet, 2006) social or communal contexts, entailing the advanced developmental stages of adults and groups (cf. Bernstein, 1971 [regarding elaborated codes]; Hulstijn, 2017 [regarding higher language cognition]).

The formal and informal language politics in DQ3 and DQ4 may determine the relevant strategic efficacy/traction of Min-LPP. Indeed, Min-L opinion formation processes, rooted in the doxa of DQ4 public discourses which are only weakly relevant to the episteme of DQ3's societally attested evidence, will inevitably militate against the possibilities of achieving coherent ethnicisation/cogent identity formation (DQ4), and thus undermine meaningful community-wide adherence to collective rationales to support EV (emanating from DQ3 and DQ4).

Quadrant 4: Coherent Ethnicisation. This creates the broader societal context by which disparate members of the minority group contribute and adhere to sustainable identity, ideological formation and social reinforcement practices. In the context of competition with Maj-L Ethnicisation, each Min-L generation negotiates and formulates their identity through intra-Min-L and inter-ethnic discourses and participation. The aim of these continual negotiations is to achieve a sustainable compromise between assimilatory majoritarian ethnicisation on the one hand and the attainment of Min-L Civic Expansion with sustaining and (re) vitalising LPrPr on the other hand. This DQ encapsulates aspects of individual and collective processes in which ethnolinguistic issues are consolidated or formalised as consequential and recognisable elements of the group's collective identity. This includes processes of how the identity is individually perceived and collectively ascribed and prescribed. The collective coherence of a minority group's sense of identity can be demonstrated by the desire and capacity of the minority to align identity ascription processes with praxis, including practical efforts to protect or enhance their societal position vis-à-vis competing cultural groups.

The emergence and elaboration of language politics pertains to DQ4. In some cases, the lack of political adroitness or weak societal relevance of the formal administration or implementation of DQ3 civic initiatives can have a detrimental effect on DQ3-4 operating as positive dynamics for the Min-L. DQ3-4 are of vital relevance in stabilising the Min-L in society as these DQs provide the critical collective context in which a Min-L cohesive group devises and implements creative approaches to bolster their situation (cf. Fishman, 2001). As discussed in Ó Curnáin & Ó Giollagáin (2024, p. 403) regarding 'Anglobalisation' and World Language Systems, demographically large and even mega languages (e.g. French, Hindi, Bengali, non-English European languages, etc) are involved in this dynamic interplay of individual and collective agency as both minoritised and minoritising language cultures in what can be characterised in its negative aspects as the tragedy of the global sociolinguistic commons⁹.

9. EV frameworks also need to be cognisant of historical multilingual processes: 'Moreover, given that the growth of African cities is largely driven by migration from rural areas, it seems clear that a full

Participation as praxis

The concept of Participation in the dynamics refers to the various social players, participants, groups or communities of practice in varying social, socio-economic, political, cultural activities pertaining to minority society across DQs, including their involvement in institutional sectors, such as sports clubs and schooling, that aim to serve the communal requirements of the Min-L group.

Among the social players encompassing the societal dimensions of minority social dynamics there are:

- Minority primary language speakers entailing participants in primary Language Culture
- Minority secondary language speakers entailing participants in a Minority Tangential Culture (see below) relating to the primary Language Culture
- Minority secondary language learners/speakers encompassing adherents or participants in a Minority Neo-culture (see below)
- Majority members in favour of provisions for the minority
- Majority members opposed to provisions for the minority
- Community leaders of the primary Language Culture, and importantly those leaders based in the Min-L social geography
- Sectoral leaders in the Min-L civic promotion or in LPP bodies
- Political, bureaucratic and institutional leaders influencing (positively or negatively) civic provision for the primary Language Culture and Min-L civic sectors.

The implication of our framework is that the individual and collective actions (and inactions) of all participants during each of the four processes shape the LPP outcomes and affect Min-L EV.

Competition between Participants

The fourth GT of Competition in and between Participants concerns the pivotal competitive dynamics between the various Participants in relation to prescriptive and political power, geo-demography, and socio-economic, civic and cultural resources. A key aspect of the competitive dynamic in EV is the

understanding of urban multilingualism will require a better understanding of the kinds of multilingualisms that people bring with them as they move to urban spaces or back and forth between urban and rural ones' (Di Carlo & Good, 2020, xxiii–iv).

comparative dimension, in that Maj-L developments may far out-strip those of the Min-L group, producing a perception of Min-L underdevelopment and restricted options. This competition contributes to positive or negative societal forces determining a supportive or a detrimental dynamic for maintaining the social integrity and the *in situ* salience and EV of the Min-L. The LanDS theory of EV will have obvious LPP and LPrPr implications in that interventions in relevant DQs will vary dependent on the measurable effects of contributing variables in specific DQs and in the overall LanDS dynamics.

The cyclical LanDS model is based on the order of four primary DQs from micro- to macro-levels, encompassing the biological and chronological development of the individual or cohort and the expanding nature of the societal and civic networks as the individual or cohort mature and develop socially (see the discussion below about Process). Levels in Fishman's GIDS diagnostic schema can be easily accommodated in our LanDS cycle: GIDS levels 4 to 1 correspond to DQ3-4, while GIDS levels 5 and 6 correspond to DQ1-2 EV activities. Aspects of GIDS levels 7 to 8 (EGIDS 7 to 10) occur in DQ3-4 reflecting societal issues in DQ1-2. Similar to other complex systems, our DQs can be subdivided to delineate further categorical differentiation.

Social Dynamics of Progression through the Developmental Quadrants of Minority-Language Ethnolinguistic Vitality

Figure 2 illustrates the circular progression from DQ to DQ in Min-L EV. The contracting flow represents the typical threatened ethnolinguistic minority – the contraction of the flow indicating demolinguistic deterioration in the social dynamic, as in the case of language shift pressures. The comparative contraction in the Min-L flow also represents the disjunctures and impediments of the Min-L community to reproduce commensurately its group vitality from generation to generation and to maintain its demolinguistic status. As sections of the Min-L vernacular (L1) community have or are experiencing the assimilative pressures from the competing stronger ethnolinguistic group(s), the contracting flow depicts the lack of continuity in Min-L transmission from a generation with Min-L competence and social capital to the subsequent generation raised in the language of the competing ethnolinguistic group. As stated regarding Figure 1, Min-L EV is dependent on the four key GTs of Directional, Processual, Participatory and Competitive progression through the DQs by individuals, cohorts and groups.

As a fluvial metaphor, EV's directional tenet is that of an intergenerational cycle, recalling, for instance, the familiar water cycle from rain to stream to river to evaporation and rain again

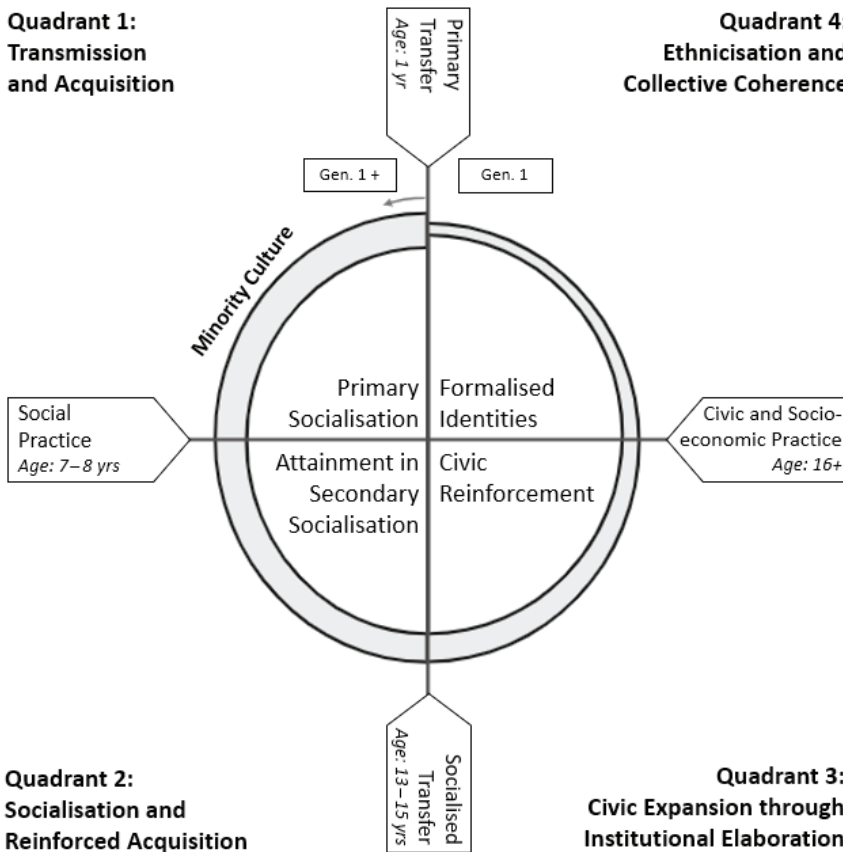


Figure 2: The Four Developmental Quadrants in Minority-Language Contracting Social Dynamics.

Ongoing contractions in the absolute demographic extent of the minority group, and significant demise in the geographic social densities of the minority speakers obviously implies that there are fewer and fewer individuals participating in the four DQs. Reductions in numbers of the participants experiencing the benefits of socialised transfer, and peer and civic reinforcement, militates against possibilities for the successful collective and socio-economic progression from one stage to the next in sufficient numbers and cohort densities to make these processes salient features of the youth minority intra- and inter-group relations. Figure 2, therefore, depicts the social dynamic of a Min-L group contending with

the societal pressure of language shift to the dominant language and the ongoing assimilation of the minority group in the normative functions of the dominant group.

Social Dynamics – Majority-language Speakers in the Minority Context

Figure 3 expands on the presentation of the LanDS structure by representing the influence of the Maj-L Participants in the Min-L social dynamic. The Figure includes a darker grey, expanding flow with directional arrows indicating that the majority speakers act in accordance with a positive dynamic through the DQs in the context of the Maj-L and culture. The expanding dimension to the Majoritarian flow indicates the demolinguistic growth of Maj-L speakers through the DQs, and, by corollary, it expresses the detrimental or subtractive effect, from a minority perspective, caused by the (dominant) practice of the Maj-L in the social geography, as well as the civic and institutional contexts of the minority group. The outer Majoritarian Culture flow encircles the Minority flow to indicate that minority cultures undergoing Language Shift (LS) have to function within the strictures of their subordinate relationship to the power structures, civic dominance and normativising influence of the Majoritarian Culture.

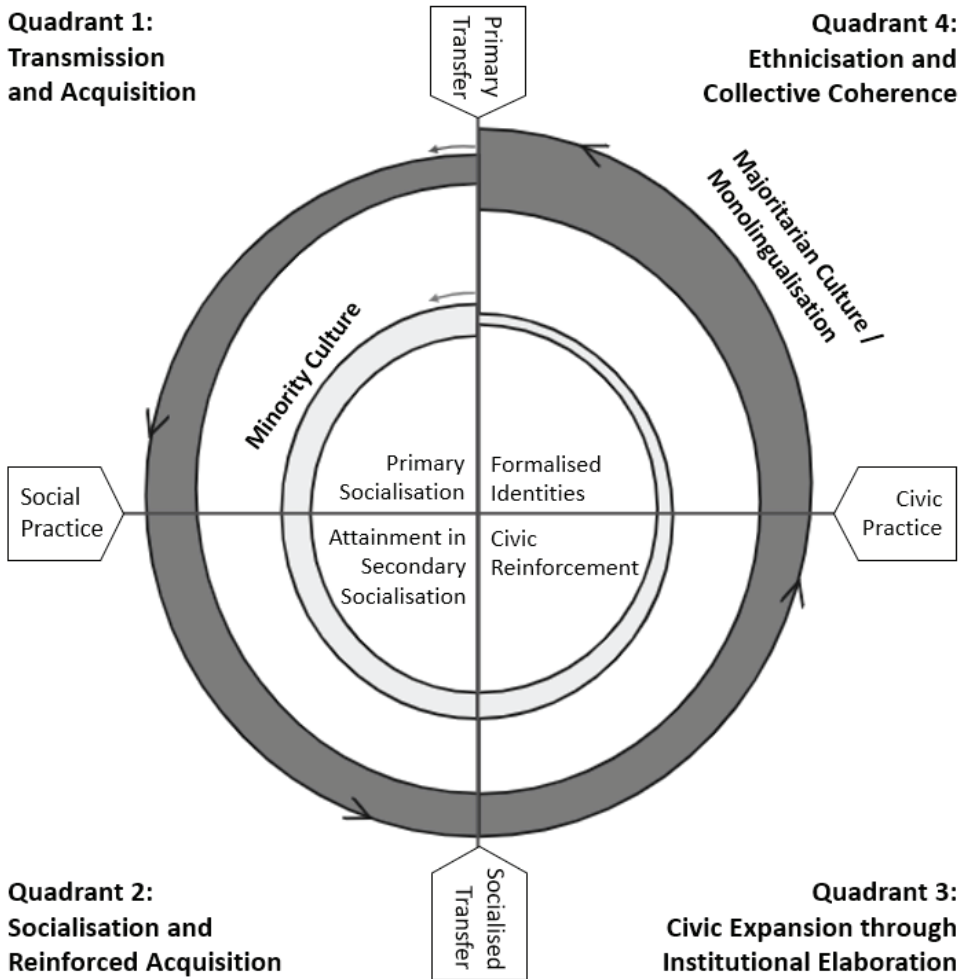


Figure 3. Majoritarian Culture in the Minority-Language Social Dynamic.

Social Dynamics – Participants in the Tangential Culture and Neo-Culture in the Minority Context

In Figure 4, two additional semi-circular bands are added to the Min-L social dynamic – one representing the Tangential Culture in the Min-L society and the other indicating the Minority Neo-culture. The semi-circular band, attached to the outside of the Minority Culture, with a dotted border portrays the Tangential Culture in the Min-L social dynamic. This Tangential semi-circle represents the role in the minority social dynamic of some Min-L speakers who are not L1

speakers of the Min-L. A Participant in the Tangential Culture refers to a speaker who has acquired the Min-L through participation in some communal aspects of the Min-L peer-group socialisation in the social geography of the Min-L L1 community. The Tangential Participants (TP) may be considered to be in a tangential relationship with the L1 community as they have had social experience of witnessing the L1 language and culture in their *in situ* social milieu, rather than relying entirely on school-based acquisition of some Min-L competence. As they have not experienced Min-L primary socialisation (DQ1) and as they have only partial experience of the Process of secondary socialisation (DQ2), their inclusion in the minority social dynamic commences at the intersection of DQ2-3. The TPs have, therefore, participated in some of secondary socialisation and have the linguistic competence to avail of and contribute to the Civic Reinforcement of the Min-L, hence the Tangential semi-circle pertaining to DQ3-4 and adjacent to the Minority Culture flow. An example of a TP would be an L1 speaker of the competing Maj-L who had the opportunity to actively participate in higher-density minority L1 social networks and to acquire aspects of his or her Min-L competence in social interactions. The TP can be differentiated from the minority L2 learner in that the L2 learners are generally dependent on school-based pedagogical inputs.

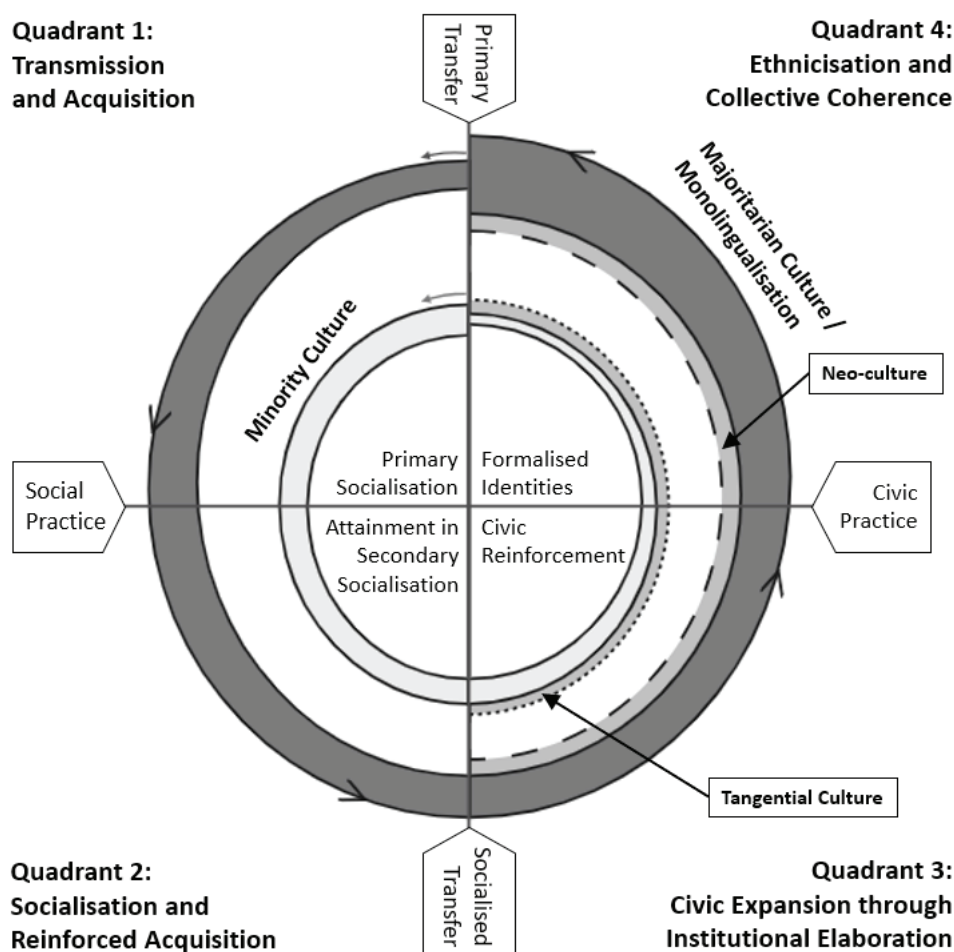


Figure 4: Tangential Culture and Neo-Culture in the Minority-Language Social Dynamic.

Social Dynamics – Participants in the Neo-culture in the Minority Context

Also in Figure 4, an inner semi-circle, adjacent to the Majoritarian Culture and bordered by a dashed line, is added to the social dynamic to represent the Participants who pertain to the Min-L Neo-culture. This semi-circle, therefore, represents the L2 dimension in the minority societal condition, and the effects of the L2 learners' and speakers' interactions in the minority dynamic. Participants in the Neo-culture (Neo-Ps) can be differentiated from both the L1 speakers

and Participants in the Tangential Culture in that they have not experienced or gone through DQ1 primary socialisation or DQ2 secondary socialisation as practiced by the L1s or the partial societal experience of TPs in Min-L peer-group practice. In general, the Neo-Ps may ascribe or assert a Min-L identity by virtue of benefitting from pedagogical or curricular provision in Min-L schooling, either by participating in Min-L classes in the Maj-L school system or by virtue of being enrolled in Min-L immersion programmes. Neo-Ps can be considered to have a beneficial effect on the dynamic when their concerns align with those of the minority L1 and TPs. This can often be the case when the interests of the Neo-Ps evolve beyond them having a focus on the Min-L as a school subject.

(Re)assimilation of the Participants in the Minority Social and Cultural Dynamic into the Majoritarian Social and Cultural Context

The LanDS EV framework also discusses and illustrates the assimilatory pull towards the majoritarian culture, associated with the various Min-L Participants. These various assimilatory pressures are explained in the discussion of Figure 7 of the original LanDS paper (cf. Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2025, pp. 49-51), in which the assimilatory pull from the Minority, Tangential Cultures and the Neo-culture to the Majoritarian Culture and to its social dynamics. Original LanDS Figure 7, in essence, expresses the ubiquitous assimilation of minority speakers into majority society. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in the case of threatened Min-L groups experiencing the detrimental social dynamic of LS.

These assimilatory pressures are a feature of the disruption engendered by the majority speakers to the potentially positive dynamic of the minority speakers and the disturbance to their progressive movement through the DQs. For example, the participation of monolingual Maj-L speakers in the schooling of the minority speakers will almost certainly lead to the situation where the *lingua franca* of the primary pupils will be the Maj-L, thus precluding the possibility of the undisrupted progress of the young minority speakers through the Min-L peer-group social reinforcement of DQ2 Processes. In this case, for the young minority speakers, their language will be confined to a home language which has limited wider social functions. The narrowing of the social function of the Min-L to increasingly isolated family units or formal contexts is a typical process in LS. However, in the case of endgame LS, the differentiation of the social dynamics of the various Participants becomes an irrelevance as assimilation into the subordinating majoritarian culture necessarily becomes the only viable societal option.

Discussion

Frameworks and models are measured by their heuristic contribution: do they encapsulate most (if not all) the pertinent variables and situations that they seek to illustrate? In this case, does the social dynamic theory discussed here describe, explain and predict the societal phenomena underpinning the prospects for the EV of a minority group? If so, they may also provide a practical (normative) purpose by suggesting effective policies and programmes to enhance the societal sustainability of an ethnolinguistic group. Our contribution is academic: we hope our LanDS framework improves upon existing frameworks, notably those of Fishman, 1991, 2001; Landry *et al.*, 2022; Bourhis & Landry, 2008; and Lewis & Simons, 2016. Our framework is based on our review of the literature on EV, including other frameworks, and on fieldwork experience as well as Min-LPP analysis in several Min-L contexts (cf. Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2007a,b; Ó Giollagáin & Charlton, 2015; Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2020; Bourgeois, 2024a,b). The improvement introduced by the LanDS structural theory is that it accounts for the progress of the individual through key developmental (DQs) stages while also indicating the parallel reinforcing social developmental processes (see Figure 1), which entails sociolinguistically relevant General Tenets (GTs) such as comparative resource distribution among Min-L and Maj-L speakers and groups. LanDS focuses on, therefore, the interplay of the individual in society and society's impact on the individual.

Our LanDS evidence-based and universalising approach (for modern and modernising contexts) provides a useful structured approach for devising policies to improve EV and assessing actual impacts on minority situations. Implicitly, the framework suggests that effective Min-LPP will work as a holistic integration of DQ1-4 and the four GTs, aiming at comprehensiveness pertaining to the individuals and the ethnolinguistic groups, while recognising the foundational relevance of DQ1-2. DQ3-4 build on the formative socialisation processes in DQ1-2. Indeed, prioritising DQ3-4, at the expense of DQ1-2, is unlikely to produce the most beneficial societal outcomes or the optimal cost-effective results from LPP inputs (cf. Grin 2003, 2024).

The case for this new social dynamic approach to EV stems from the growing awareness of a 'reality gap' between the formal aspirations for Min-L promotion and the lack of traction of aspirational Min-LPP in existing speaker communities (cf. Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2020, 2007a,b; Ó Giollagáin & Caimbeul, 2021; Lenoach *et al.*, 2012; Ó Giollagáin & Ó Curnáin, 2016; Brookes & Roberts, 2013; Ó Riagáin,

2008; Iurrebasso, 2023¹⁰; Bourgeois, 2024b). Similarly, we propose this new EV framework to: a) support more socially attuned diagnostics of minority speaker realities; and b) provide an analytical context for reformulations of Min-LPP to address issues of societal endangerment in the contemporary Min-L condition (cf. Bradley & Bradley, 2019, pp. 1-5). Individualised (or often atomised) language promotion at the expense of Min-L community protection is in danger of eliding the obvious reality that Min-L groups are perishable ethnolinguistic entities. Unless an ethnolinguistic group possesses/generates the social (interpersonal), societal, cultural, institutional and political capabilities and related collective capacities that frame and orient individual and collective behaviour to maintain and replenish themselves intergenerationally (cf. Ó Curnáin & Ó Giollagáin, 2024; Bastardas-Boada, 2013, p. 161) in sufficient societal densities, the prospects of language minorities sustaining themselves as differentiated ethnolinguistic groups will inexorably fade.

As languages are socially perishable, it is critical to understand the social dynamics by which speakers defend or maintain EV in the societal spheres most relevant to collective maintenance. The expenditure of public money and human resources on providing the institutional opportunities for individual take-up of Min-L opportunities or symbolic practices can only make strategic and financial sense if it is balanced by a policy and support framework that aims to attenuate the trajectory of demolinguistic decline in an existing minority vernacular group. Admitting officially this Min-L societal challenge would be a first step in mitigating collective Min-L anxieties about minority-community demise (cf. Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2020, Chapter 5).

Our assessment of the limitations of existing EV frameworks is that they are not sufficiently cognisant of: a) the interactional, intra-stage social dynamics in the various societal processes that govern and sustain Min-L practices in primary socialisation (DQ1 above), secondary socialisation (DQ2), civic reinforcement (DQ3), and the processes of psycho-social affiliation and adherence to the minority cultural group (DQ4); b) the inter-stage interdependency of the productive participation in the various processes to progress positively to subsequent DQ stages in the overall Min-L social dynamic; and c) holistic scientific analyses of the overall complexities. A new model incorporating these social dynamics and facilitating dynamic progression is required. The Min-L planning cycle, as discussed in Gazzola *et al.*, (2024, pp. 4-5), for instance, falls within our systemic

10. See also the European Language Equality Network statement on the Kontseilua Resolution that Basque-language communities are in a 'linguistic emergency': <https://elen.ngo/2024/11/12/elen-backs-kontseilua-resolution-that-basque-is-in-a-linguistic-emergency/>

approach primarily under the scope of DQ3 Processes and initiatives. However, non-optimal Min-L politics emanating from approaches to DQ4 concerns can often lead to dereliction or inertia in what are initially conceived as positive recommendations for Min-LPP engagement with DQ3 concerns. A corollary of these DQ3 impediments to DQ4 progress, is that chronic social dynamics in DQ4 language politics can void the civic aspirations and institutional efforts of DQ3, especially when the societal collapse of the Min-L community becomes evident. (See Fishman, 1991, p. 143 on the ‘Irelandization’ problem in LPP, where in our terms, DQ3 prioritisation, supported by post-structuralist discourses, offers symbolic institutional engagement to Min-L communities without sufficiently addressing their (post)modern assimilation to Maj-L societal normativity, involved in our DQ1-4). Put simply, the common prioritisation of DQ3 civic concerns at the expense of DQ1-4 comprehensiveness is ineffectual as Min-LPP.

The LanDS framework displays the processes of (post)modern reflexivity in that it engages with actual Min-L societal conditions which both drive the instability and inform the analytical tools and practical interventions to address the socio-cultural, economic, political, demolingistic and identitarian interactions between Min-L and Maj-L speakers and groups. It must be acknowledged, however, that formal Min-LPP is either impractical or unfeasible for most ethnolinguistic groups ‘because of their subordination to an exclusive Dominant MAJLPP’ undergoing more optimal LanDS (Ó Curnáin & Ó Giollagáin, 2024, p. 405). In order to address modern problems, one needs to use modern tools. The progression from Figure 1 to 4 is an indication of the processes of sociolinguistic complexification in modernity, where in particular DQ3-4 increase their intensity and, therefore, their societal relevance. The overall framework also provides an analytical tool to help clarify the academic, political and civic discussions and approaches to these issues, especially Min-L instability.

There is a problem in the reluctance or refusal of post-structuralist LPP to engage strategically with the full scope of minority dynamics in society, beyond its pragmatic alignment with a DQ3 focus. This reluctance explains the perceived inertia and lack of authority of formal Min-L promotion in the minority first-language community. Such post-structuralist LPP is all the more challenging in neoliberal contexts (cf. Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2020; Ó Giollagáin & Ó Curnáin, 2024; MacLean, 2022; and Ó Giollagáin & Caimbeul, 2021, pp. 190-191 on the Min-L ‘referent class’). Symbolic LPP is unlikely to be of long-term benefit to threatened ethnolinguistic groups as it is insufficiently targeted on four key strategic requirements for minority group societal sustainability:

- Collective socio-political structure(s) to advance the societal requirements of the disadvantaged Min-L group
- Organisational mechanisms to extend individual and collective social agency to members of the minority
- Strategic capacity and resources to devise and implement cooperative initiatives to support the socio-economic competitiveness of Min-L speakers
- Astute group leadership to foster loyalty among the minority to sustain the Min-L ethnolinguistic collective.

As majority groups naturalise and optimise these societal, political and socio-economic capacities to their competitive advantage in optimal LanDS, a Min-L group with a weak focus on or capacity for these four prerequisites will not survive the transformations of (post-)modernity.

Conclusion

The LanDS framework makes the case for an analytical social dynamic approach to the DQs contributing to the EV. The framework visualises the sustainability of a language group as a series of the core component social and formal processes which determines a Min-L group's viability or vulnerability: a positive social/formal dynamic contributes to a groups' viability, and negative or subtractive dynamic processes in the Min-L group culminate in its societal decline and erasure. The LanDS framework portrays EV as a societal emergent feature of a Min-L group's capacity to cultivate and enact key social processes of primary and secondary socialisation (entailing the socialised transfer of the minority's language and cultural capital). LanDS EV also entails the Civic Reinforcement of the Min-Ls and their cultures, and affiliation processes generating a meaningful sense of belonging to a coherent collective identity. EV is realised, therefore, as the societal outcome of a groups' organisational facility to generate and sustain key inter-related social, institutional, civic and affiliative processes on which the societal continuity relies. Just as individual-focused and sector-specific interventions will fail to ensure Min-L EV, so will other LPPs that do not follow holistic, communal and long-term (multiple generations) goals towards sustainability.

Our LanDS EV framework suggests that significant aspects of current LPP approaches to Min-Ls require substantial revision to align Min-LPrPr¹¹ to the

11. Minority Language Protection and Promotion.

developmental social and formal dynamics indicated in this initial delineation of feasible Min-L societal sustainability.

Applying the LanDS framework entails:

- a) Examining the existing levels of focus in current Min-LPP regarding LanDS
- b) Devising Min-LPP approaches that are more relevant to DQ social dynamics and to more optimal EV outcomes
- c) Quantitative and qualitative assessments through demolinguistic and sociolinguistic surveys of the actual, meaningful (rather than purely or predominantly symbolic) engagement with the social dynamics entailed in the four DQs of LanDS and their EV outcomes
- d) Adjusting and amending the ongoing Min-LPP based on the ongoing EV research.

Undoubtedly, existing research evidence (e.g. Ó Giollagáin *et al.*, 2020; cf. Mac Giolla Chríost, 2022) already demonstrates the need for an increased and more pertinent focus in Min-LPP on holistic, multi-level solutions with ideological coherence. The LanDS framework offers a productive language-in-society alternative to the socio-political inertia of Symbolic LPP. Issues relating to integrating primary and secondary socialisation of Min-L cohorts and individuals into formal Min-L promotion and protection are pivotal in order to have credible relevance to the societal future of Min-L communities. As Symbolic LPP does not adequately address the societal threats to minority ethnolinguistic sustainability, it is clear that Min-L speakers and their communities require a more productive approach to addressing challenges and devising feasible ways to support their continuance in diverse societies.

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4. The French language in Canada: speaker density and language use, transmission and knowledge

Étienne Lemyre (Statistics Canada)¹

Abstract: French is an official language of Canada along with English, however, people whose mother tongue is French (alone or together with another language) represent a minority of the population nationwide (20.9%) and in all provinces and territories, except Quebec (77.8%). At the local level, most French-mother-tongue Quebecers reside in neighbourhoods where they represent over half of the population (93.4%), whereas this is the case for only one quarter of French-mother-tongue people in the rest of the country (25.4%). Higher proportions of native French speakers at the neighbourhood level are associated with a greater likelihood French-mother-tongue people retain the use of French as their main home language, a lower likelihood that French-mother-tongue adults form a mixed-language couple, and higher rates of transmission of French from parents to children in both monolingual and mixed-language families. Among people whose mother tongue is not French, those residing in neighbourhoods with a high proportion of people whose mother tongue is French were more likely to adopt the use of French as their main home language or to acquire knowledge of French as a second language. While these associations are seen both in Quebec and outside Quebec, the majority status of the French language in Quebec and its minority status elsewhere in Canada is reflected in the results, regardless of local-level concentration of French speakers at the neighbourhood level.

Keywords: French, Canada, Quebec, speaker density, mother tongue, home language, language transmission, language knowledge.

Introduction

Hundreds of languages are spoken in Canada, including more than seventy languages that are Indigenous to the country. Nevertheless, knowledge and use of French and English largely predominate in Canada, with both languages having official status at the federal level since 1969. While the official languages of Canada are spoken in communities across the country, French speakers represent

1. The views expressed in this text are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Statistics Canada.

a majority of residents only in the province of Quebec, while the language is in a minority situation in the other provinces and in the territories, as well as in Canada as a whole.

In Canada outside Quebec, several studies have shown a relationship between the relative proportion of French speakers at a local level and use of the language (Marmen, 2005; Castonguay, 2005; Corbeil *et al.*, 2007), but whether that relationship exists to the same extent in Quebec warrants more investigation. Assuming equal demographic weight at the local level, are selected demolinguistic indicators of French use, transmission and knowledge similar in Quebec and outside Quebec?

This chapter briefly covers language concepts from the Canadian census and presents the evolution between 1991 and 2021 in the number and proportion of Quebecers and other Canadians whose mother tongue is French or who have knowledge of French. Selected indicators are then shown according to the concentration of the French-mother-tongue population at the local level; the retention or adoption of French as a main home language, occurrence of mixed-language couples, parents-to-children transmission of French and knowledge of French as a second language. In conclusion, similarities and dissimilarities between Quebec and the rest of Canada are discussed.

Language concepts in the Canadian census

Conducted every five years, the Census of Population is administered to all households in Canada. The Canadian census ranks among those with the most language questions in the world (Christopher, 2010), which allow to examine a wealth of different concepts over a long span of time.

Mother tongue refers to the language first learned at home in childhood that is still understood at the time of census. If a person no longer understands the first language learned, they must indicate the second language they learned². People may report two languages or more as their mother tongues if those languages were learned at the same time at home before the person started school.

In the census, Canadians also report their *home language*. People who speak more than one language at home on a regular basis must report which one is spoken most often. This information allows to determine the main home language

2. As the mother tongue reported in the census must still be understood by Canadians, this implies people may «forget» the first language they learned in childhood. This phenomenon is relatively rare and happens among people who seldom use the first language they learned in childhood. It's more frequent in minority French-speaking communities and among second generation immigrants (see Lepage, 2011).

of Canadians (the language spoken most often at home) and their secondary home languages (spoken on a regular basis, but not most often). People may speak two languages most often at home if they are spoken equally often.

The census also collects information on the *knowledge of languages*. A person reports having knowledge of a language if they know the language well enough to conduct a conversation of some length on various topics.

In addition to the other concepts described above, the Canadian census also collects information on primary secondary instruction in the minority official language (English in Quebec, French in Canada outside Quebec) and language use at work³.

The French language in Canada: recent trends

The number of Canadian who have knowledge of French continues to grow from census to census; it rose from 8.5 million in 1991 to 10.7 million in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2023a). However, as the population who did not know French grew faster, the relative proportion of French speakers in Canada slightly declined, from 31.5% in 1991 to 29.1% in 2021.

In Quebec, most people could conduct a conversation in French in 2021 (93.7%), a proportion virtually unchanged compared to 1991 (93.6%). The proportion of Quebecers who can speak only French⁴, but not English, is declining (from 58.1% in 1991 to 47.3 % in 2021), while the proportion of people who can speak both French and English is on the rise (from 35.4% in 1991 to 46.4% in 2021). This is in large part due to French-mother-tongue people acquiring knowledge of English (Lemyre, 2023). Outside Quebec in 2021, 88.0% of Canadians could conduct a conversation in English, but could not speak French. In contrast, 9.9% had knowledge of both French and English, slightly down 1991 (10.6%). Very few Canadians outside Quebec knew French only and could not converse in English (0.7% in 1991 and 0.4% in 2021).

While the number of Canadians whose mother tongue is French⁵ also grew, from 6.6 million in 1991 to 7.7 million in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2023b), their

3. Information on language use at work is collected through a detailed census questionnaire administered to 25% of households.

4. They may also have the capacity to conduct a conversation in a language other than French or English.

5. Includes persons whose sole mother is French or who have French and another language as their mother tongue. For more information on multiple mother tongues in the Canadian census and their interpretation, see Lepage, 2020.

relative proportion fell more markedly (from 24.5% in 1991 to 20.9% in 2021). Such a decrease in the relative proportion of the French-mother-tongue population was observed in Quebec (from 82.5% in 1991 to 77.8% in 2021) and in Canada outside Quebec (from 5.0% in 1991 to 3.9% in 2021). Several factors are at play to explain these decreases, such as the more pronounced aging of the French-mother-population compared to the overall population, a historical underrepresentation of people whose mother tongue is French in international migration, and outside Quebec, the incomplete transmission of French from parents to children (Houle and Corbeil, 2017).

The local-level distribution of the French-mother-tongue population

The distribution of the French-mother-tongue population is neither uniform in Quebec nor in Canada outside Quebec. In fact, both Quebec and the rest of Canada have regions⁶ with either lower or higher concentrations of French speakers.

In several Quebec regions, the French-mother-tongue population represents at least 90% of the population. This proportion is somewhat lower in parts of the Montréal area (Quebec's largest city), in border regions⁷ and in Northern Quebec. For example, on the island of Montréal, which include the core part of the metropolitan area, just under half of people (49.3%) have French as their mother tongue, with important differences across neighbourhoods⁸.

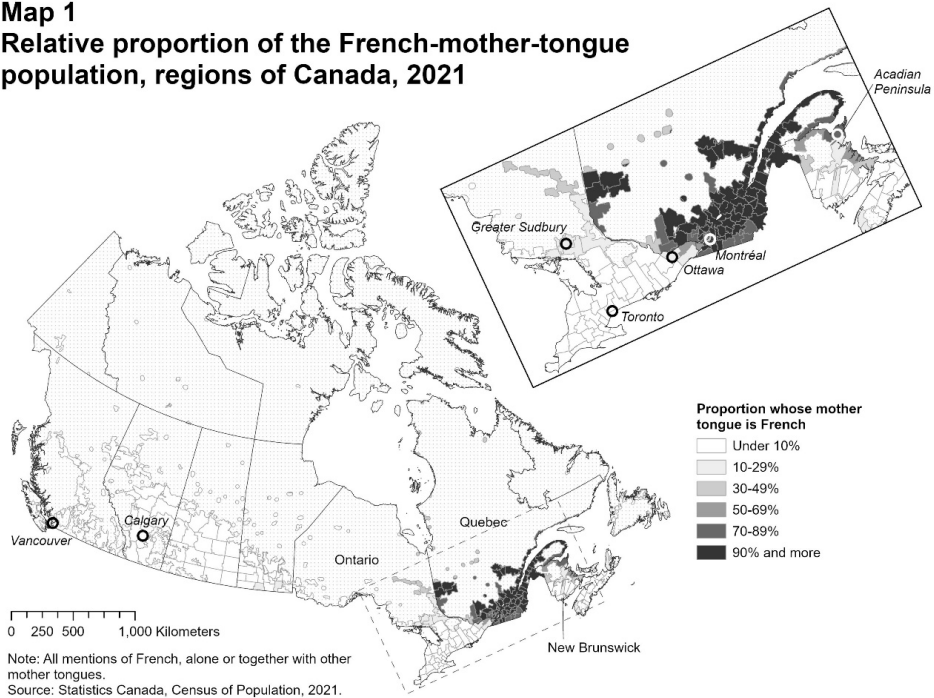
6. Refers to census divisions, which are groupings of neighbouring municipalities that are akin to counties in some jurisdictions.

7. For example, Pontiac (41.1%) along the Ontario border.

8. The proportion represented by French-mother-tongue people on the Island of Montréal ranged from 6.2% to 95.9% in neighbourhoods with at least 100 residents.

Map 1

Relative proportion of the French-mother-tongue population, regions of Canada, 2021



In most regions outside Quebec, the French-mother-tongue population represents less than 10% of the population, including in some of Canada's largest cities like Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary. The capital of Canada, Ottawa, differs in that respect, as 15.7% of its inhabitants have French as their mother tongue⁹. Other regions with a high relative proportion of native French speakers include for example the city of Greater Sudbury (26.0%) in Northern Ontario and the Acadian Peninsula¹⁰ in New Brunswick (84.5%).

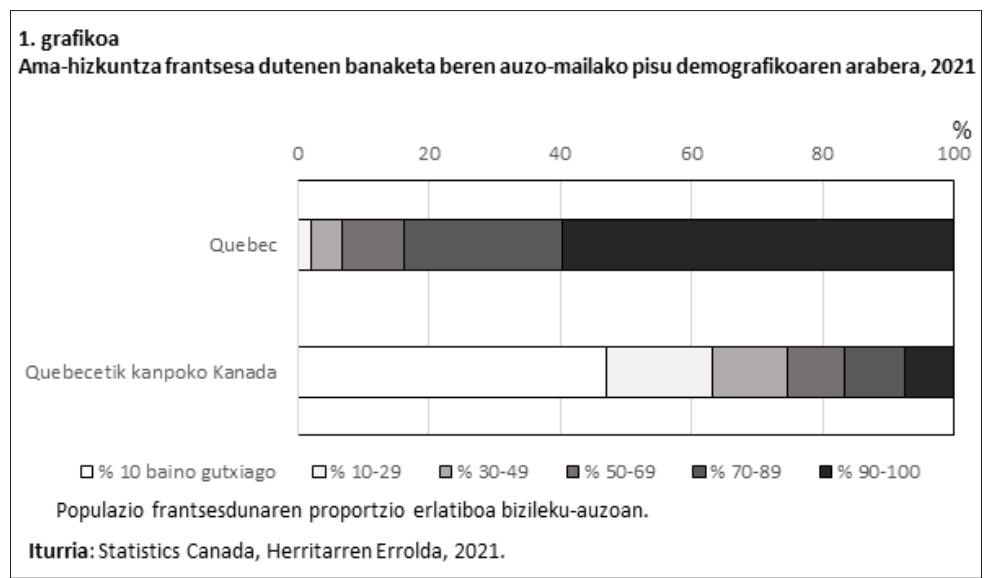
Differences in the distribution of native French speakers at the regional level are reflected at the neighbourhood¹¹ level. In Quebec, 93.4% of French-mother-tongue people reside in neighbourhoods where they form more than half of the population. In particular, close to 3 in 5 reside in neighbourhoods where the relative proportion of French-mother-tongue people is 90% or more. Fewer than

9. In Ottawa's neighbourhoods with at least 100 residents, this proportion ranged from 3.0% to 56.0%.

10. This proportion is for the census division of Gloucester, which encompasses most of the Acadian Peninsula.

11. Refers to census dissemination areas, which are groupings of adjacent street blocks with an average population of 400 to 700 persons.

0.1% of French-mother-tongue Quebecers reside in neighbourhoods where their relative proportion is less than 10% of the local population.



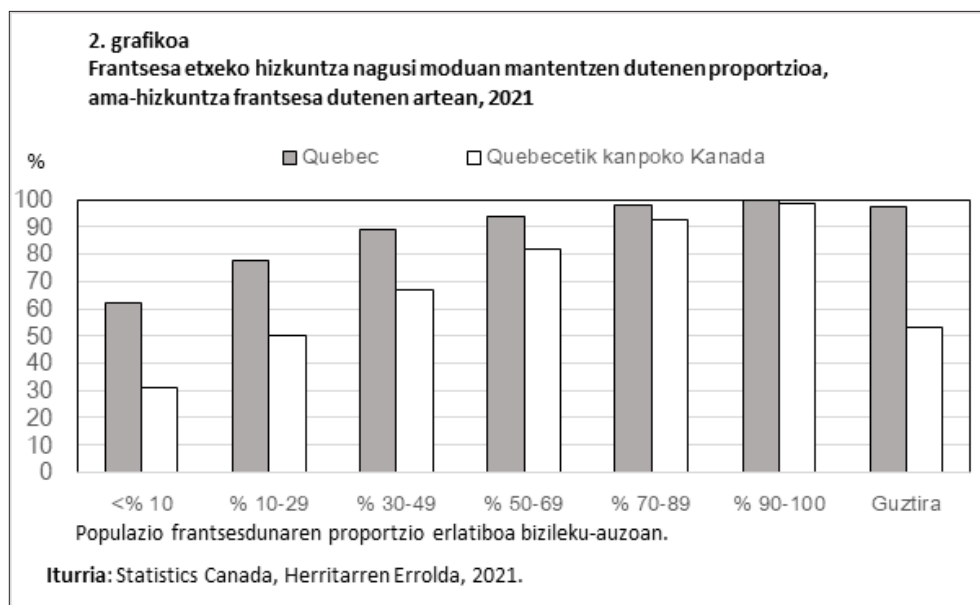
In contrast, outside Quebec, close to half of people whose mother is French (47.0%) reside in neighbourhoods where their relative proportion is under 10%, and about a quarter (25.4%) reside in neighbourhoods where they form over half of the local population. Just 7.7% of French-mother-tongue people outside Quebec live in neighbourhoods in which the relative proportion of the French-mother-tongue population is 90% or more.

Retention and adoption of French as a main home language

The continued use of French as a main home language by native speakers is associated with an increased likelihood that the language will be passed on to the next generation. Previous studies have shown a relation between spatial concentration of French speakers in a minority situation and the likelihood of home language retention (Sabourin and Bélanger, 2015). Several reasons may explain why people who learned French in childhood may stop to speak French most often at home over the course of their life and adopt the use of another language, that is English in most instances. These reasons include speaking with a spouse or partner in the context of a mixed-language couple, or for education reasons (Pépin-Filion *et al.*, 2024).

In Quebec, the retention of French as a main home language is widespread, with 97.6% of French-mother-tongue people speaking the language most often at home¹² in 2021. In contrast, in Canada outside Quebec, just over half (53.3%) of French-mother-tongue people still spoke French most often at home in 2021; 14.0% still spoke French at home on a regular basis, with another language spoken most often (English in most cases), and 32.7% no longer spoke French at home.

The contrast between the situation in Quebec and outside Quebec is more nuanced when accounting for the relative proportion of the French-mother-tongue population at the neighbourhood level. The retention rate of French as a main home language is higher in neighbourhoods where the French-mother-tongue population is more concentrated. In fact, the retention rate of French is above 90% both in Quebec and outside Quebec in neighbourhoods where the relative proportion of native French speakers is at least 70%. In neighbourhoods where the concentration of French speakers is lower, the retention rates of French as a main home language are markedly higher in Quebec compared to outside Quebec. For example, in areas where native French speakers represent under 10% of the population, 62% of French-mother-tongue Quebecers still spoke French most often at home, more than double the proportion observed among native speakers outside Quebec (30.9%).

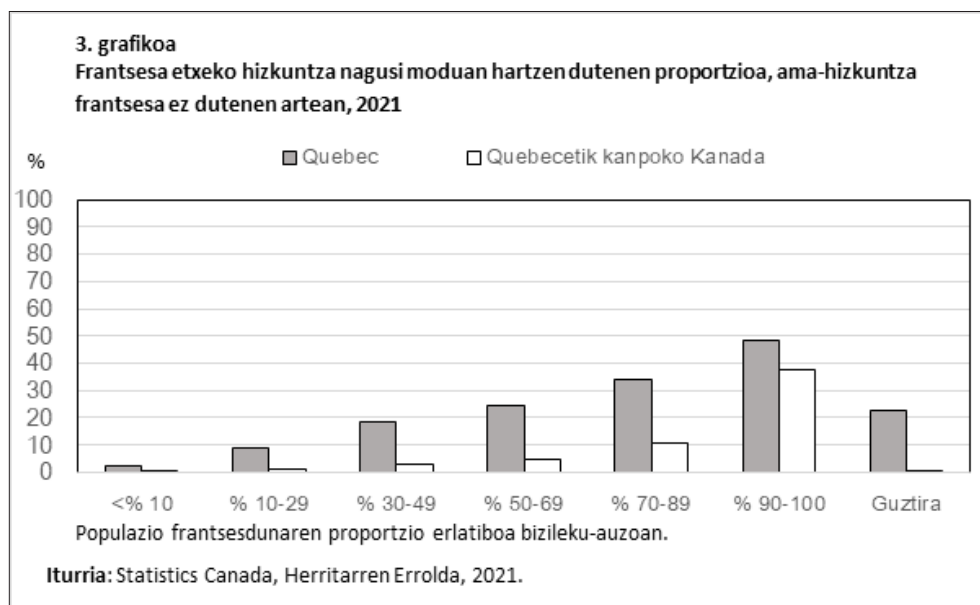


12. As the sole language spoken most often at home or equally often with another language.

The adoption of French as a main home language by those who did not learn the language in childhood is a measure of the language's attractiveness. Immigrants who adopt the use of French as their home language are more likely to have done so prior to settling in Canada, or in the first years that followed their arrival in the country (Corbeil and Houle, 2014). Moreover, immigrants from French-speaking countries or who arrived as children are significantly more likely to adopt the use of French at home (Sabourin and Bélanger, 2015).

In 2021, 22.8% of Quebecers who did not have French as their mother tongue spoke French most often at home, while this proportion was just 0.2% outside Quebec.

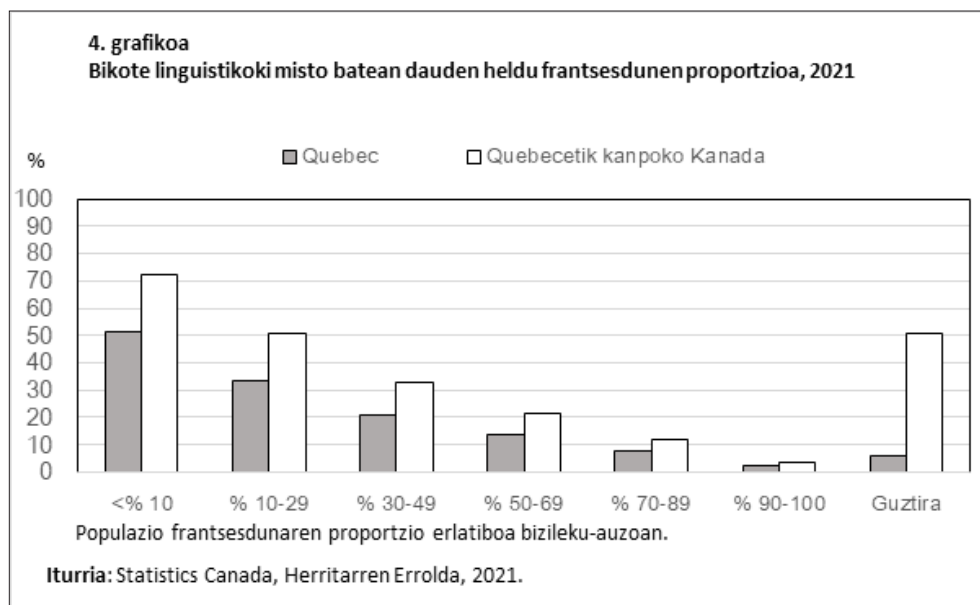
The proportion of non-native speakers who adopted the use of French as their main home language varied according to the neighbourhood-level relative proportion of the French-mother-tongue population. It was at least three times higher in Quebec compared to outside Quebec, except in regions where native French speakers represented 90% or more of the population. In those regions, the proportion of people whose mother tongue is not French that adopted the use of French as their main home language was higher in Quebec (48.4%) compared to outside Quebec (37.8%), but with a smaller difference compared to other neighbourhoods.



Mixed-language couples

French-mother-tongue adults in a mixed language couple have a spouse or partner whose mother tongue is not French. As previously mentioned, forming a mixed-language couple is a key factor associated with native French speakers no longer speaking French most often at home, even if in many instances French stopped being spoken at home before the formation of the mixed-language couple (Corbeil, 2005). Knowledge of the majority language and local language demographics influence the likelihood of forming a mixed-language couple, as they are related to the frequency of contacts between language groups (Bernard, 1995). Attending English-language institutions like colleges and universities is also associated with a higher likelihood to form a mixed-language couple among French-mother-tongue young adults (Lemyre, 2025).

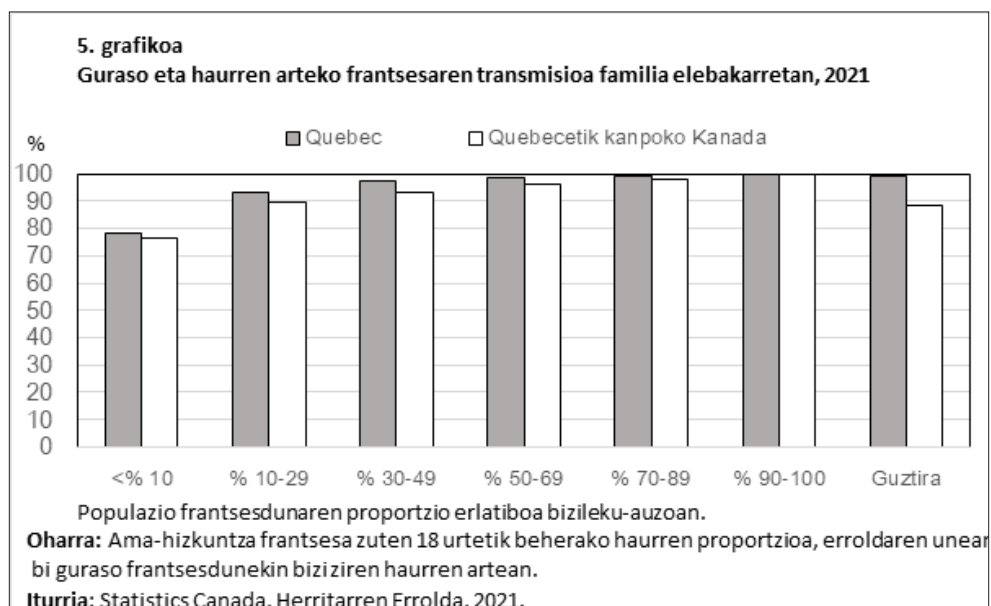
In Quebec, few adults whose mother tongue is French are in a mixed-language couple (5.7%), while it's the case for over half of French-mother-tongue adults outside Quebec (51.0%). As expected, French-mother-tongue adults are more likely to be in a mixed-language couple in neighbourhoods where their relative proportion is lower, and very few French-mother-tongue adults are in a mixed-language couple in neighbourhoods where native French speakers represent 90% or more of the population (2.4% in Quebec and 3.5% outside Quebec). However, regardless of the local-level concentration of native French speakers, mixed-language couples were more frequent outside Quebec than in Quebec.



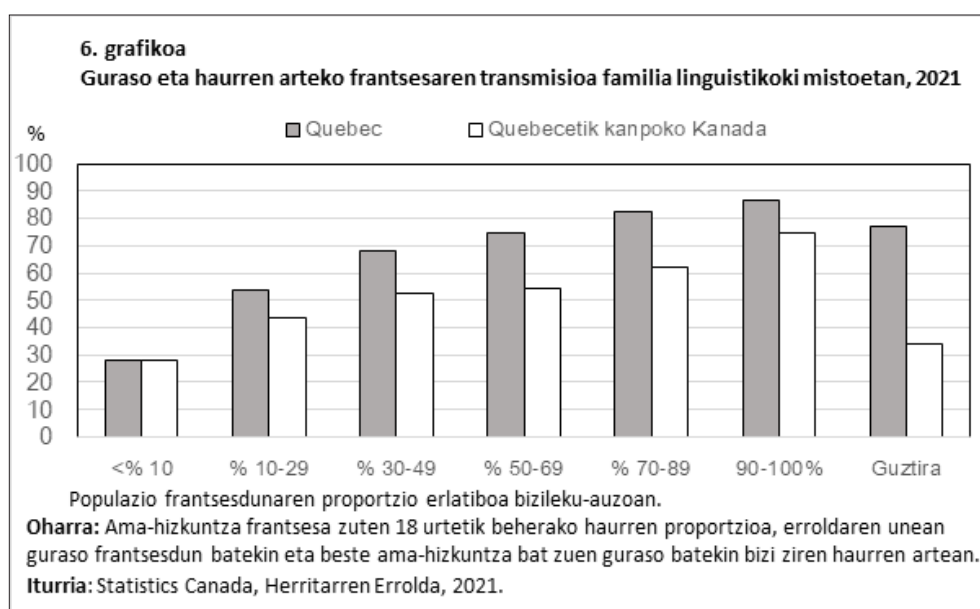
Parents-to-children transmission of French

The transmission of French from parents to children is represented as the proportion of children aged under 18 who have French as their mother tongue among those who lived with both their parents at the time of the 2021 census. Children in monolingual families have two French-mother-tongue parents, and children in mixed-language families have one French-mother-tongue parent and one parent whose mother tongue is a different language. While transmission of French in monolingual families tends to be high, the situation is more complex in mixed-language families. In these settings, the mother's language is more often the first language learned by children compared to the father's language, and the transmission rate of French varies according to the country of origin of parents and language demographics of the place of residence (Bouchard-Coulombe, 2011; Vézina and Houle, 2014).

The vast majority of children who grow up in monolingual French-speaking families end up having French as their mother tongue both in Quebec (99.4%) and outside Quebec (88.4%). Transmission rates are approximately 90% or higher in neighbourhoods where native French speakers represent at least 10% of the population. Under that threshold, transmission of French from parents to children is noticeably lower, both in Quebec (78.0%) and outside Quebec (76.4%).



The transmission rate of French from parents to children in mixed-language families in Quebec (77.2%) is more than double that of the rate observed outside Quebec (34.3%). In Quebec, more than half of children from mixed-language families have French as their mother tongue in neighbourhoods where native speakers represent at least 10% of the population, whereas outside Quebec this threshold is met in neighbourhoods where native French speakers represent 30% or more of the population. Transmission of French is consistently higher in Quebec than outside Quebec in mixed-language families, except in neighbourhoods where the proportion of native French speakers is under 10%. In those neighbourhoods, transmission rates of French are identical in Quebec and outside Quebec (27.9%).



Knowledge of French as a second language

Several people whose first language learned in childhood is not French learn the language later in life, for example in school. In fact, participation in French-language programs in primary or secondary school is a key factor in acquiring French as a second language¹³ in Canada (Allen, 2008; Pépin-Filion and Lemyre,

13. In this context, second language refers broadly to any language in which a person can conduct a conversation, but that was not the first language learned in childhood that is still understood at the time of census.

2024). The presence of French speakers at the local level is also associated with a higher likelihood to acquire knowledge of French outside Quebec (Turcotte, 2019).

Close to three quarters (72.1%) of Quebecers whose mother tongue is not French¹⁴ had knowledge of the language in 2021. In comparison, outside Quebec, 6.5% of Canadians could conduct a conversation in French. Quebec's higher proportion reflects the majority status of French in the province.

Overall, more people acquire knowledge of French as a second language in neighbourhoods where the relative proportion of native French speakers is higher, with important differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada. In Quebec, the proportion of people whose mother tongue is not French who have knowledge of the language is 60% or higher in neighbourhoods where native French speakers represent at least 10% of the population. Outside Quebec, knowledge of French reaches the same threshold only in neighbourhoods where native French speakers represent 90% or more of the population. In neighbourhoods where native French speakers represent 50 to 89% of the population, less than 40% of people whose mother tongue is not French could conduct a conversation in the language outside Quebec.

Conclusion

In Canada, results from the 2021 Census show that a higher concentration of native French speakers at the neighbourhood level is associated with higher rates of retention or adoption of French as a main home language, a lower occurrence of mixed-language couples, and higher rates of parents-to-children transmission of French and acquisition of French as a second language. While the French language is in a minority situation in Canada overall, its majority status in Quebec and minority status outside Quebec is reflected by indicators, regardless of the relative proportion of the French-mother-tongue population at the neighbourhood level¹⁵.

Assuming equal demographic weight at the neighbourhood level, French-mother-tongue Quebecers are more likely than their peers outside Quebec to retain the use of French as their main home language, are less likely to form a mixed-language couple, and both monolingual and mixed-language families are more likely to pass on French to their children. Furthermore, people whose mother

14. Includes people whose mother tongue is English or a non-official language in Canada, alone or together with another language, except French.

15. Except in the case of transmission of French from parents to children in mixed-language families in neighbourhoods where French speakers represent less than 10% of the population, with rates being identical in Quebec and outside Quebec.

tongue is not French are more likely to learn French or adopt French as their main home language in Quebec compared to outside Quebec.

While there exists an association between local speaker density and demolinguistic indicators, we cannot infer a causal relationship. Several other individual and community-level factors besides the linguistic composition of neighbourhoods might be at play. For example, persons who are prone to adopt the use of French as their home language might be more likely to move to neighbourhoods with more French speakers, hereby reinforcing the patterns we are observing. Moreover, the relative proportion of speakers at a local level is not the sole factor that plays a role in a language's vitality. Local dynamics may foster participation in French-language institutions, even in areas where the relative concentration of French speakers is low (Gilbert and Langlois, 2006).

Other language concepts from the Canadian census could also be examined in relation to French speaker density at the neighbourhood level, such as the use of French at work or participation in French-language primary and secondary instruction in Canada outside Quebec. This analytical lens could also be applied to other results from the 2022 Survey on the official language minority population, which provides information on a variety of topics pertaining to the use of French in the private and public sphere outside Quebec, for example in contexts of access to government services, healthcare, justice, culture or community activities.

Furthermore, the Canadian census would also allow to examine the relation between speaker density and the situation of other languages spoken in the country that do not have official status federally, such as Indigenous languages and languages spoken by immigrant communities.

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5. Continuum and Co-dependence: the inter-related dynamics of higher, mid and lower-density Welsh-speaking communities

Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones (University of Wales Trinity Saint David – ELEN)

Abstract: The article reflects on recent developments in Wales with regard to policy in this field, and particularly the work of the Commission for Welsh-Speaking Communities. It also draws on the contribution of Prosiect BRO: Comprehensive Sociolinguistic Survey of Contemporary Welsh-speaking Communities¹ to the Commission's first and second phases (2022-2024, 2024-2026).

It compares the Welsh and the Basque contexts, highlighting the differences in the progress made in key policy areas which include increasing the numbers of speakers, developing the education system and analysing the social use of the languages. Both languages face challenges with regard to the sustainability of their higher-density areas.

The article analyses the interrelated dynamics of contemporary Welsh-speaking communities across higher, mid, and lower density areas. It presents the argument that such areas – in the Welsh context at least – are inter-connected through geo-linguistic continua and function in multilayered social, cultural and economic co-dependencies. While higher-density areas are traditionally viewed as the heartlands of language vitality, this article emphasises that, in the contemporary Welsh context, such areas do not operate in isolation from medium or lower density speaker areas. In the same way, areas of mid and lower density also require strong connections – a geo-linguistic continuum and/or a social, cultural and economic co-dependence – with the higher-density areas. Welsh-speaking communities are interlinked through flows of people in a networked and geo-linguistic economic and cultural ecology. This relationship suggests that the future of Welsh as a community language depends not only on reinforcing the highest-density areas, but also on strengthening the Welsh language across the country and placing this awareness of the continuum and co-dependence at the heart of the debate and of policy making.

Keywords: Language policy and planning (LPP), Welsh, Density of speakers, Arnasgune.

1. Prosiect BRO's work on the higher density areas is a partnership between the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, the University of the Highlands and Islands and Oxford University, supported by the Welsh Government. <https://www.wales.ac.uk/bro>

Introduction

This article examines the case of Wales and the Welsh language in relation to the theme of language strongholds, language heartlands, or communities with a higher density of speakers. In its exploration of the Basque concept and framework of “arnasgune” from a Welsh perspective, it highlights the points of comparison and differences between the two languages and their sociolinguistic situations. It presents four of the contemporary challenges facing the Welsh language: increasing the numbers of speakers, education policy, social use and sustaining the language in areas and communities where the percentage of speakers is at its highest. In its discussion of recent policy interventions, it takes as its central argument that it is necessary to understand and recognise the reality and the significance of continuum and co-dependence, in the case of Wales, across higher, mid and lower-density areas. As a result, it proposes that continuum and co-dependence should be key considerations in the conceptual frameworks used to develop and implement policies to address the challenges of sustaining higher-density speaker areas.

The Welsh Language

Welsh is one of the best-known language environments in the field of European minoritised languages among activists, researchers and policy makers alike. It is a medium-sized minoritised language with over half a million speakers (Welsh Government, 2022), an active civil society of language movements and cultural associations, a broad socioeconomic base and a public environment where language policies have been developed and implemented in a range of different fields.

Thirty years ago, in its analysis of language production and reproduction of 48 minority language groups in the European Union, the Euromosaic Report (Nelde et al., 1996) situated Welsh in the second cluster, one point below Basque in the Basque Autonomous Community and one cluster above Basque in Navarre and Basque in France. Since then, different language planning approaches and different socioeconomic factors have contributed to the situation of both Welsh and Basque today, across their territories, diaspora communities and in digital spaces.

Welsh and Basque

The points of comparison between the two countries and their languages are familiar : both have a territory of some 20,000km² and a population of about 3 million; both Basque and Welsh are linguistically distant from Spanish/French and

English; their speakers are of all ages and live in both rural and urban settings; and the percentages and numbers of speakers are not dissimilar, though Basque has over the past three decades made significant headway over Welsh, a trajectory that looks very likely to continue.

Both language groups have contributed ideas, experiences, campaigns, research, initiatives and policies to the European discourses about the sustainability of so-called ‘regional or minority languages’, ‘linguistic diversity’ and ‘minoritised and endangered languages’. Although Wales, as part of the UK, is no longer in the European Union, Welsh engagement in European networks continues. Activists, academics and policy makers from Wales are members of the ELEN² (European Language Equality Network) – the NGO representing civil society organisations in this field and NPLD³ (Network for the Promotion of Linguistic Diversity) – whose focus is on autonomous and regional government representation. Although the UK can no longer participate in Erasmus+, there is Welsh engagement in the field of language revitalisation in EU programmes where the UK is eligible to participate, such as E-COST-Action Plurilingmedia⁴ and EU Horizon project Fosterlang⁵.

The bilateral relationship between Wales and the Basque Country predates these networks, through key individuals⁶, the Mercator Network and the former European Bureau for Lesser-used Languages. Over the decades, contact and exchanges between the two language groups have regularly taken place, more often than not through these networks. In 2022, the Etxepare Basque Institute, in partnership with my own university, established the Alan R King Chair in Sociolinguistics⁷ in order to consolidate and further develop the exchange between researchers, civil society and policy makers in this field in the two countries. In January 2026, the Welsh and Basque Governments renewed their relationship, signing an updated Memorandum of Understanding⁸, which includes a commitment to working together in areas including transport, energy, technology, food, education, fiscal strategy, social policy, health, culture and language.

2. ELEN <https://elen.ngo/>

3. NPLD <https://npld.eu/>

4. Plurilingmedia <https://plurilingmedia.eu/>

5. Fosterlang <https://fosterlang.al.uw.edu.pl/>

6. Particular mention must be made of the relationship between Ned Thomas and Txillardegui, see for example Thomas, N. (2010) *Bydoedd* Tal-y-bont: Y Lolfa.

7. Alan R. King Chair <https://www.etxepare.eus/en/basque-studies-chairs>

8. <https://media.service.gov.wales/news/wales-must-take-every-opportunity-to-work-with-other-nations-and-regions-following-agreements-with-catalonia-and-basque-country> [Accessed 1 February 2026]

The sociolinguistic situation of Basque, and the progress achieved over the past 40 years, is arguably by now the most important external point of reference or comparison for Welsh language activists, researchers and policymakers.

Current challenges of the Welsh Language

(1) Numbers and percentages of speakers

Whilst the data of every successive Census and Sociolinguistic Survey for the past five decades show increases in the numbers and percentages of Basque speakers, the same cannot be said of the Welsh language. According to the data of the UK Census, the number of people aged 3 years or older able to speak Welsh in Wales decreased with every decade during the 20th century until 1991, when there was a small increase in numbers to 508,100 from the previous 503,500 in 1981. In 2001, a more substantial increase to 582,400 was reported. However, the last two Censuses have shown a decrease of 20,400 speakers in 2011 and 23,700 in 2021, taking the total number to 538,300 which represents the lowest percentage but not the lowest numbers recorded, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of people aged three years or older able to speak Welsh, 1921 to 2021 [in Wales].

Year	Number	Percentage of the Population %
1921	922,100	37.1
1931	909,300	36.8
1941	The census did not take place in 1941 due to the Second World War.	
1951	714,700	28.9
1961	656,000	26.0
1971	542,400	20.8
1981	503,500	19.0
1991	508,100	18.7
2001	582,400 (r)	20.8
2011	562,000	19.0
2021	538,300	17.8

Source: Welsh Government / ONS, Census of Population 1921-2021; Welsh language in Wales, Census 2021.

Unlike Scotland, where the Census was postponed until 2022, the UK Census was undertaken in Wales in 2021, during the Covid pandemic and when children had not been attending school regularly due to the public health restrictions. This school age population saw by far the largest reduction in numbers and percentage points between 2021 and 2011: 22,200 fewer speakers aged 3-15 years old, and a decrease of 6 percentage points among those aged 5-15 years old.

Table 2. Number and percentage of people aged three years or older able to speak Welsh, by age group, 2011 and 2021.

Age group	2011		2021	
	Number	%	Number	%
3-4	16,500	% 23.3	11,900	18.2%
5-15	152,300	% 40.3	134,700	34.3%
16-19	43,700	% 27.0	38,800	27.5%
20-44	150,700	% 15.6	153,800	16.5%
45-64	107,900	% 13.3	107,300	13.0%
65-74	45,100	% 15.0	45,900	12.8%
75+	45,800	% 17.5	45,800	15.1%
All (3+)	562,000	% 19.0	538,300	17.8%

Source: Welsh Government / ONS, Census of Population 1921-2021; Welsh language in Wales, Census 2021.

These figures suggest that conducting the Census during the pandemic, with pupils' long absences from schools, provides the explanation for most of the reduction in the total numbers of speakers. Yet, it is important to note that this disruption or lost opportunities for children and young people to acquire, use and develop Welsh through the education system and associated socialisation during the pandemic may have mid- and long-term effects. Even with a direct correlation between the effects of the pandemic and the numbers of Welsh speakers in the 2021, we can still see that the number of Welsh speakers is not increasing in line with the projection or trajectory of the Welsh Government's policy aim of reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050, as published in 2017 (Llywodraeth Cymru, 2017).

Table 3. Projected trajectory of numbers and percentage of people aged three years or older able to speak Welsh, at specific periods up to 2050.

Blwyddyn	Nifer	Canran
2011	562,000	19
2017	580,000	19
2021	600,000	20
2026	630,000	20
2031	680,000	22
2036	750,000	24
2041	830,000	26
2046	920,000	29
2050	1,000,000	31

Source: Welsh Government (2017), Welsh speaker estimates 2011 to 2050: technical report.

The ‘Cymraeg 2050 Strategy: A million Welsh speakers’ (Welsh Government, 2017) was adopted by the Welsh Government in 2017, taking as its strapline of a ‘million Welsh speakers’ from civil society campaigning led by Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg. *Cymraeg 2050* has three strategic themes: (a) Increasing the number of Welsh speakers, (b) Increasing the use of Welsh, and (c) Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context.

(2) Language Acquisition through education

One of the most significant differences in the recent sociolinguistic history of Welsh and Basque is the pace with which the education systems in their respective administrations have addressed the issue of increasing the availability of Basque and Welsh-medium education. In the case of the Basque Autonomous Community, the percentage of pupils undertaking their statutory education in Basque (model D) has increased from under 15% in the mid-1980s (Lloyd Williams et al., 2024) to over 70% of the combined system (and 94% of the public system) by 2024⁹. Whilst recognising that no such development has taken place in Navarre or in Iparralde, the fact that the vast majority of the 360,000 children and young people educated in the Basque Autonomous Community enrol in Model D has contributed significantly to the growth in the numbers of speakers in the younger age groups. In the case of Welsh, such progress has not been achieved to date.

9. <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy.pdf>

Today, some 17% of the school age population attend Welsh-medium schools with some 9% in bilingual models. English-medium education – with Welsh as a subject – continues to be by far the dominant model, with 73% of pupils in 2023/24 enrolled in this model, compared to 79% in 2003/04.

Table 4. Number of learners by school medium of teaching, 2003/04–2023/24

	Welsh medium	Bilingual	English medium	Excluded	Total
2003/04	91,300 (19%)	8,930 (2%)	389,340 (79%)	4,591 (1%)	494,161
2012/13	73,888 (16%)	42,776 (9%)	342,449 (74%)	5,755 (1%)	464,868
2022/23	77,922 (17%)	42,160 (9%)	343,700 (73%)	6,090 (1%)	469,872
2023/24	78,582 (17%)	40,783 (9%)	340,003 (73%)	6,472 (1%)	465,840

Source: StatsWales, Welsh Government, *Maintained schools and pupils by local authority, Welsh medium type and year (up to 2023/24)*. Categories aggregated following Lloyd Williams et al. (2024).

Within Wales there is significant regional variation, where the percentage of the school age population educated primarily in English also reflects the percentage of the population across all ages with no skills in Welsh according to the UK Census. It is worth bearing in mind that education is a statutory duty at the level of local authorities in Wales and that many civil society organisations have continuously called for more equitable access to Welsh-medium education, through national and local campaigns, parent action groups and strategic litigation. Indeed, there is significant frustration among those dedicated to Welsh language revitalisation that so many obstacles continue to hinder the process of rolling out Welsh-medium education and making it a reality for the majority of the population as has happened during the same period in the Basque Autonomous Community.

There are high expectations that the recently passed Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act, 2025 will make this change finally happen across Wales. The Act will contribute towards the goal of achieving a million Welsh speakers by 2050 by putting measures in place that aim to ensure that all pupils, by the time they cease to be of compulsory school age, are independent Welsh language users, at least. In brief, the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 will require the Welsh language strategy to include a target of at least a million Welsh speakers by 2050, as well as other targets relating to the use of the Welsh language, including in the workplace and socially. In addition, it will establish a standard approach to describing Welsh language ability based on the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. It sets out

three statutory language categories for schools (“Primarily Welsh language”, “Dual Language”, and “Primarily English language, partly Welsh”), and provides for the designation of those language categories, along with requirements relating to the minimum amount of Welsh language education provided and Welsh language learning goals, for each category. It will link the linguistic planning undertaken at a national level (by placing a duty on the Welsh Ministers to prepare a National Framework for Welsh Language Education and Learning Welsh), at local authority level (by placing a duty on local authorities to prepare local Welsh in education strategic plans), and at school level (by placing a duty on schools to prepare Welsh language education delivery plans). It will establish a National Institute for Learning Welsh as a new body, responsible for supporting people (of all ages) to learn Welsh.

(3) Social use of the Welsh Language

Increasing the social use of the minoritised language is an objective shared by communities across Europe. In the case of Catalonia, some 90% of the population can speak Catalan, 79% use it at work or school, 78% use it at least occasionally with friends and 68% use it to varying degrees within the family¹⁰. Yet even in these conditions there is strong awareness among activists, researchers and policy makers that the social use of Catalan is under severe pressure largely attributable to structural conditions such as the influence of social media, audiovisual and digital spaces, population mobility, and the social norms of conducting or switching to single language conversations and exchanges, with Castilian taking that position. Barcelona City Council recently appointed to the role of Commissioner for the Social Use of Catalan¹¹, and various studies point to the youngest age group being the most Catalan-speaking in terms of being able to speak the language, but that speakers of this age group are less intensive users of Catalan than speakers in many other age groups (Departament de Política Lingüística & Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya, 2025; Vila i Moreno et al., 2023). Similar discourses of concern about the social use of the language are found in a range of endangered or minoritised language communities across Europe.

In that regard, Wales is no exception. For example, Part 1 of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 bears the title ‘Promotion and facilitation of use of the Welsh language’ and refers to the Welsh language strategy targets of at least a million Welsh speakers and increase in use. It notes that the

10. <https://llengua.gencat.cat/ca/el-catala/coneixement-i-us/>

11. <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/ca/organigrama-municipal/organ/Comissionat%20d%27%C3%9As%20Social%20del%20Catal%C3%A0>

‘strategy on promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh must include the target to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Wales to at least 1 million by 2050’, which means that as a result of passing this Act, the strategic target has become a statutory target. In addition, the Act notes that the strategy must ‘set targets for increasing the use of Welsh in Wales, including use in the workplace and social use’. Increasing the use of Welsh is the second main aim of ‘Cymraeg 2050’, and the target in this context is to double the percentage who use Welsh every day. The Welsh Government places increasing language use ‘at the heart of everything’ it does in the context of ‘Cymraeg 2050’¹². It states that it will ‘continue to work across Government and with various partners across Wales to increase the use of our language at home, at a social and community level, on the schoolyard, in workplaces, in businesses, and digitally.’ The importance of the social use of the Welsh language could not be expressed in a more persuasive narrative. In the Welsh context, the social use of the Welsh language includes use in the family and in the workplace as well as in leisure, culture and sport, in community life and online.

However, language is a societal phenomenon and the opportunities to use it socially rely on speakers encountering each other in places and spaces where exchanges can take place unhindered. The conditions for social use are determined by structural factors, as argued by Isasi and Txillardegi (1994) and many others in the Welsh, Basque and wider endangered language contexts. Fishman’s concept of ‘breathing spaces’ (Fishman, 1991, p. 59) where the (minority) language can be used without the pressure of dominant language, has been developed significantly in the Basque context (as outlined in other chapters in this book) by Mikel Zabide, Iñaki Lurrebaso and others, in the journal *BAT Soziolinguistika Aldizkaria* (2019) as well as in journalism, campaigning by UEMA and others and in policy making, *Euskararen arnasguneak: Definizioaren eta erronken berrikuspena* (2024)¹³. [For discussion of the Basque debate in English, see Dorronsoro (2025, forthcoming); and in Welsh see Jones 2025¹⁴]. In international literature, Belmar & Glass (2019) made a significant contribution to the development of Fishman’s ‘breathing spaces’ through their discussion of digital or ‘virtual breathing spaces’.

12. <https://www.gov.wales/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy-action-plan-2025-2026.html>

13. <https://arnasagara.eus/arnasguneak/> or Nafarroako Gobernua, Eusko Jaurlaritza & UEMA. (March 2024). *Euskararen arnasguneak: Definizioaren eta erronken berrikuspena*. https://arnasagara.eus/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Euskararen-arnasguneak_2024ko-martxo.pdf

14. <https://pedwargwynt.cymru/dadansoddi/fel-gall-ein-hiaith-ni-andalu-yma>

The debate in the Basque Country with regard to the meaning of ‘breathing spaces’ and of ‘arnasgune’ is an important contribution to their development and application in other language communities. ‘Arnasgune’ as communities of geography (i.e. higher density speaker areas) also include within them numerous social spaces where the language can be used unhindered, reflecting Fishman’s wider definition of ‘breathing spaces’. In the Welsh context, the importance of the sustainability of the higher-density geography areas has been the focus of language campaigning since the 1960s, co-existing with campaigns for the revitalisation of the language across Wales. All in all, the social use of the Welsh language is framed in narratives that include both social geographies as well as language spaces, including the digital.

Sustainability of higher density areas of linguistic significance

The third theme of Cymraeg 2050, ‘Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context’, refers to a broad range of initiatives including technology and the digital linguistic infrastructure to culture and media. The first aim in this sector is ‘Community and Economy: Develop the economy to ensure a firm footing for Welsh-speaking communities’ which explicitly refers to ‘communities with a high density of Welsh speakers’. In the most recent Action Plan 2025-2026 (Welsh Government, 2025), this theme opens with Housing, Language and Employment, and states that the Welsh Government is ‘committed to supporting the sustainability of Welsh-speaking communities by aligning housing, language planning, economy and economic development policies to offer a range of interventions to be implemented’. At the time of publication of the Action Plan, the Welsh Government had not yet published its response to the first report of the Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities, *Empowering Communities, Strengthening the Welsh Language* (August 2024).

Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities

The Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities was established by the Welsh Government in August 2022, following the publication of the report, *Second Homes: Developing new policies in Wales* (2021). The Commission was tasked with the responsibility ‘to make recommendations to Government in order to safeguard the future of the Welsh language as a community language...[and to] lead on a socio-linguistic analysis of the health of the language in our communities’, which

would enable it ‘to consider the challenges facing Welsh-speaking communities and gain a better understanding of the linguistic, socio-economic and social restructuring challenges post COVID-19 and the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union.’

Also in 2022, the Welsh Government published the *Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan* (Welsh Government, 2022) which set out a range of different initiatives ‘bringing together economic, housing, community development and language planning interventions to ensure that Welsh-speaking communities can continue to be economically and linguistically viable.’ (Welsh Government, 2022).

In the same period, a collaboration between the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, the University of the Highlands and Islands, and Jesus College Oxford University was developed to research the higher density Welsh-speaking areas. Prosiect BRO: the Comprehensive Sociolinguistic Survey of Contemporary Welsh-speaking Communities¹⁵, also supported the work of the Commission with analyses of Census data as well as with presentations and contributions to the Commission’s discussions, before the publication of its First Report, *Empowering Communities, Strengthening the Welsh Language*.

These developments point to a clear focus on the importance of the sustainability of higher density speaker areas in Wales on the part of the Welsh Government, and its strategy for the Welsh language.

Empowering Communities, strengthening the Welsh Language

In its first report, *Empowering Communities, strengthening the Welsh Language*, the Commission set out a wide-ranging package of 57 policy recommendations aimed at protecting and strengthening Welshspeaking communities across eight different policy areas, namely economy, workplaces, community development, housing, town & country planning, equality-diversity-inclusion, Welsh-medium education and community language planning. The report’s central recommendation is to designate ‘Areas of Higher Density Linguistic Significance’, which would allow for greater consideration for the Welsh language in policymaking in the eight policy areas. It also recommended creating a specialist unit within Welsh Government to coordinate policies for areas of higher density linguistic significance.’

15. Prosiect BRO <https://www.wales.ac.uk/bro>

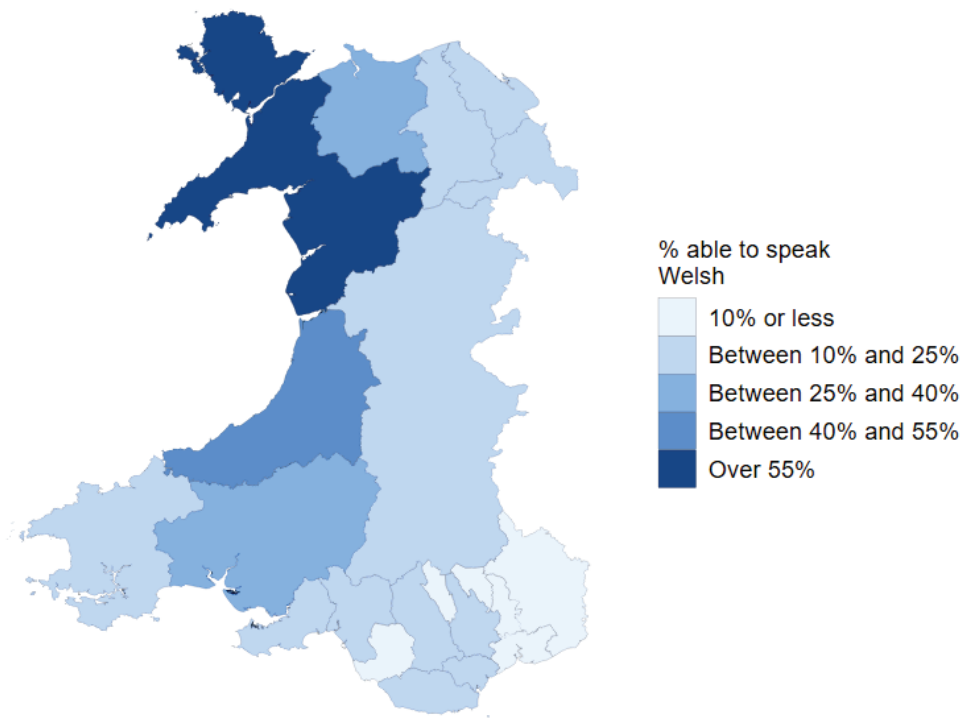
Geo-linguistic Continuum and Co-dependence: Areas of Higher Density Linguistic Significance: the contemporary Welsh Context

Welsh cartography has generally projected the percentage or density of the population that can speak Welsh using scales of 10%, from 0-10% up to 80%+. Such maps highlight the fragmentation of the highest density areas over time. The 70% threshold is often presented as the watershed point, or the most significant statistic in this context to demonstrate the societal changing point for the language in the geographic community. This percentage is primarily based on the probability of the language of inter-personal communication in such circumstances, as has been generally the case in mathematical approaches to sociolinguistics (see for example Isasi et al., 1994).

The Commission's recommendation was to set the threshold to define the 'areas of higher density linguistic significance' at 40% Welsh speakers at the UK Census 2021, while allowing flexibility for local authorities to designate areas that fall just below the threshold. Just four out of 22 local authorities in Wales have a percentage of speakers at 40% or over (Gwynedd, Ynys Môn, Ceredigion and Sir Gaerfyrddin, see table/map below). In the other two local authorities where the percentage of speakers is higher than the national average (Conwy and Sir Ddinbych), there are an additional 20 neighbourhoods¹⁶ where the percentage of speakers is over 40% and, in the next three local authorities just below the national average (Sir Benfro, Powys and Castell-nedd Port Talbot), there is a further 17 such neighbourhoods in rural and post-industrial areas. There are no neighbourhoods outside these nine local authorities where the percentage of Welsh speakers reaches 40% or over.

16. The technical term for these neighbourhoods is Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA), units of approximately 1000-3000 inhabitants. In Wales there is a total of 1917 LSOAs. In 232 of them, the percentage of people aged 3 years and over who can speak Welsh is 40% or more.

Map 1: Welsh speakers aged 3 and over by local authority, Wales, Census 2021.



Source: Welsh Government / ONS, Census 2021.

Table 5. Numbers and percentages of Welsh-speakers in Wales aged 3 years old or above according to the 22 local authorities and the national average.

	2021	
	Kopurua	Ehunekoa
Gwynedd	73,600	64.4
Ynys Môn	37,400	55.8
Ceredigion	31,700	45.3
Sir Gaerfyrddin	72,800	39.9
Conwy	29,000	25.9
Sir Ddinbych	20,900	22.5
Cymru (Gales)	538,300	17.8
Sir Benfro	20,600	17.2
Powys	21,400	16.4
Castell-nedd Port Talbot	18,700	13.5
Rhondda Cynon Taf	28,600	12.4
Wreccsam	16,000	12.2
Caerdydd	42,800	12.2
Sir y Fflint	17,400	11.6
Bro Morgannwg	14,700	11.5
Abertawe	26,000	11.2
Caerffili	17,800	10.5
Pen-y-bont at Ogwr	13,000	9.2
Merthyr Tudful	5,100	8.9
Sir Fynwy	7,900	8.7
Torfaen	7,400	8.2
Casnewydd	11,600	7.5
Blaenau Gwent	4,000	6.2

Source: Welsh Government / ONS, Census 2021.

All in all, some 243,416 people or 45% of Welsh speakers live in a local authority where the average percentage of Welsh-speakers is 40% or higher or live in a neighbourhood where the percentage of speakers is at 40% or higher. This means that setting the Welsh high-density threshold at 40% would allow the

Commission's recommendations – if implemented in public policy – to have an impact on the lives of almost half the number of Welsh speakers in Wales.

In Table 5 below, Welsh data has been mapped on to the Zones 1-4 as used in the Basque Sociolinguistic Survey. According to the UK Census data of 2021, 2% of the Welsh-speaking population live in neighbourhoods where over 80% of the population can speak the language. Creating language revitalisation policies for dispersed communities totalling fewer than 15,000 people in the Welsh context is not feasible, neither is it a real reflection on how people live their lives today. In the Welsh context, setting too high a percentage to designate higher-density areas and to vary public policy would mispresent as 'isolated linguistic enclaves' what are in reality neighbourhoods within a geographic language continuum who share a co-dependence within social, cultural and economic spheres.

Table 6. Mapping Welsh data on Basque Language Zones 1-4.

Zones by percentage of minoritised language speakers (2021)	Euskara (Basque Autonomous Community only)		Cymraeg	
	No. of speakers	% all speakers	No. of speakers	% all speakers
Zone 1: under 20%	219,385	32%	246,716	46%
Zone 2: 20% - 50%	157,209	23%	146,669	27%
Zone 3: 50% - 80%	219,008	32%	131,515	24%
Zone 4: over 80%	85,027	13%	13,412	2%
Zones 1-4 TOTAL	680,629	100%	538,312	100%

Source: Basque Government and Welsh Government, Census 2021.

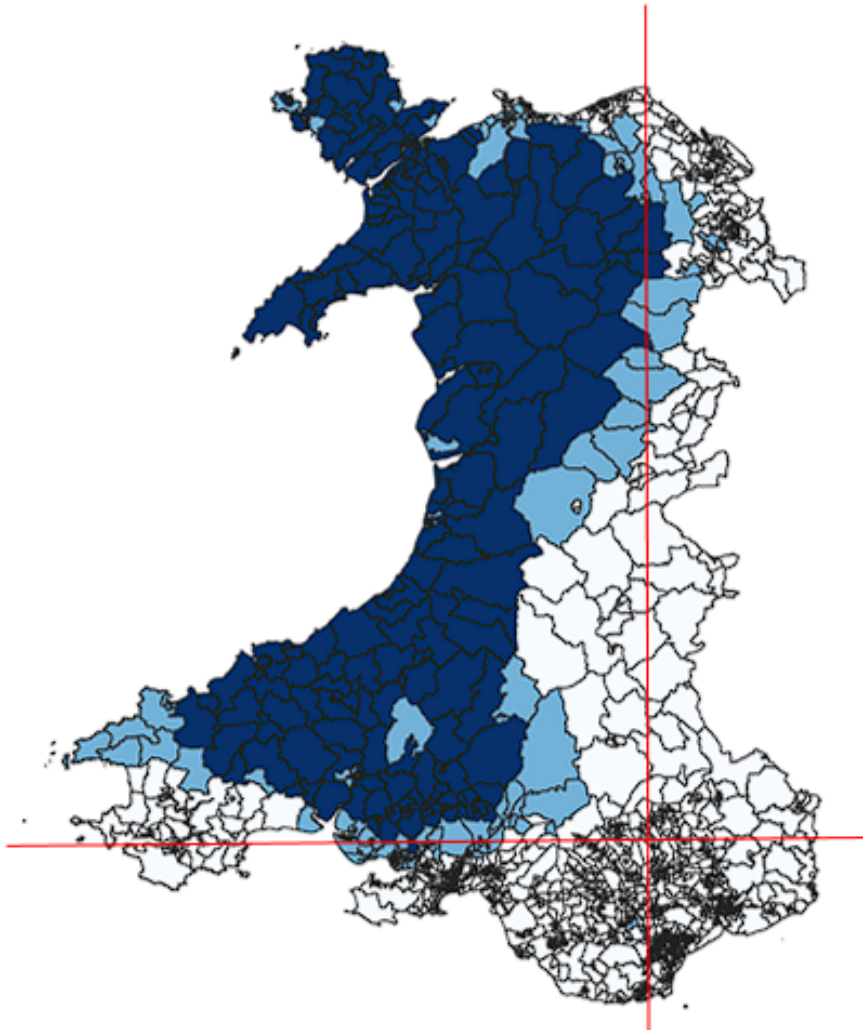
Drawing the map of higher density areas at 40% allows for greater consideration of the ways in which people in communities live, work, study and conduct their lives, especially in rural and semi-rural areas. For example, according to the UK Census of 2021¹⁷, which was conducted during the pandemic, between 12% and 14% of the population in employment of the four counties with

17. Census 2021 took place on 21 March 2021, during the pandemic and a period of rapid change. Extra guidance was given to help people on furlough answer the census questions about work. However, it is not possible to determine how furloughed people followed the guidance. More Information about specific quality considerations can be found in <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/methodologies/traveltoworkqualityinformationforcensus2021>.

the highest percentage of Welsh-speakers worked within 2km of their home. The percentage of people who worked between 2km and 60km from their home was 35% Ceredigion, 42% Gwynedd, 46% Ynys Môn and 47% Sir Gaerfyrddin (Carmarthenshire). As regards working primarily from home – and bearing in mind that the figures may well have changed after Covid restrictions were lifted – the percentages noted were around 23% in Ynys Môn, Gwynedd and Sir Gaerfyrddin and 32% in Ceredigion.

Travel to work, for study and to access other services including leisure activities also reflect the continuum and co-dependence between areas of higher, mid and lower density areas. An example of this might be a general hospital, located in a neighbourhood where the percentage of Welsh-speakers is lower than in the immediate surrounding areas. As a centre for health services, it serves a wider region and population, where there are higher, mid and lower density neighbourhoods. It is also a workplace for the population living in the wider region. Some of the Welsh-speaking workforce will live in high-density neighbourhoods. Other workers, also Welsh speaking, may live in mid or lower density areas. The hospital is their common workplace, where they also attend to patients and their families in Welsh. Without the presence of the hospital there is no workplace for speakers living in high-density neighbourhoods or for those living in mid or lower density areas. This represents the co-dependency and the importance of the geo-linguistic continuum between the different areas.

Map 2: Areas of higher (40%) and mid (20%) density linguistic significance, by lower level super output areas (LSOAs), Census 2021.



The dark areas indicate the neighbourhoods where 40% or over can speak Welsh. The lighter grey areas indicate neighbourhoods where between 20% and 40% can speak the language.

The vertical and horizontal straight lines indicate the median vertical and horizontal divisions of the Welsh population, with 50% of the population living on each side of each line.

The 'Areas of Higher Density Linguistic Significance' are located in the least populated areas of the country.

Source: Prosiect BRO, based on UK Census 2021 LSOA data.

The continuum and ‘mid-density areas’

It should be noted that there was no recommendation to grant an official ‘mid-density’ designation in the Commission’s first report. However, the Commission suggested placing a threshold of 25% to represent mid-density areas for descriptive and analytical purposes. Following further analysis from Prosiect BRO, the Commission’s discussion has since moved towards setting 20% as the most coherent percentage to identify mid-density areas for further analysis. As can be seen in Map 2, at 20% there is a clear margin between the local authorities whose speaker percentage are higher than the national average, and those whose speaker percentage fall below it. Placing the mid-density tier at 20% also allows for more ‘mid-density’ neighbourhoods to be considered and analysed, especially those within the local authorities where the percentages of speakers is below the national average. In these contexts, neighbourhoods where, say 24% of the population can speak Welsh, could be almost 12 percentage points higher than the average for their local authority. The presence of the Welsh language in day-to-day experiences in such neighbourhoods where 2 in 10 can speak it, compared to 1 in 10, can be significant and should be examined further.

In its second phase, the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities is focussing on the use of Welsh as a community language in areas of mid and lower density. Its report will be published in 2026. In this context, the ‘mid-density’ areas (over 20% but lower than 40%) can be analysed into three categories: (a) rural or semi-rural areas including market towns that have experienced language decline over the past five decades; (b) post-industrial areas that have experienced language decline in the same period; (c) urban areas that have experienced some growth in the number and percentage of speakers of the language from the 1960s onwards. This latter category includes areas in Caerdydd (Cardiff) and Rhondda Cynon Taf in the south and Sir y Fflint (Flintshire) in the north. Further research is being conducted in order to reach a deeper understanding of the profile of the Welsh language in these areas. Initial observations point to several reasons why they are higher than the average for their local authority. These include the effects of Welsh-speaking migration from other parts of Wales from the 1960s onwards, connected to employment opportunities in regions of economic growth, and increased demand for Welsh-language skills in certain sectors; enhanced language acquisition through Welsh-medium education; new generations of Welsh-speaking migration; second and third generations, continuing to live in these areas of economic stability or growth. It is important to consider the current and future roles of such neighbourhoods as the concepts of language continuum and co-dependence are explored further.

Conclusions

In the Welsh context, there is still very much to achieve in public policy at a national level, not least in the field of education. As we enter the second quarter of the 21st century, Welsh-medium education is still very difficult to access in many parts of Wales, requiring long travel times on the part of pupils and the additional commitment of their families. One example of this is that parent groups and activist movements in the Welsh capital are still campaigning today to have a Welsh-medium secondary school in their neighbourhood. The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 has been designed to address this situation, but at present campaigning is still an essential tool for language revitalisation in Wales. In as much as Welsh is a national language, belonging to all parts of Wales, it is evident that more needs to be done in the field of education – for example – to make this narrative an everyday reality.

In the Welsh context, the discourse of the Welsh language belonging to everyone in Wales, regardless of wherever they live, is fundamental to the understanding of the need to make policy for higher-density areas. In its response (Welsh Government, 2025) to the first report of the Commission for Welsh-Speaking Communities, the Welsh Government reiterated its commitment to strengthening the Welsh language in every part of Wales. The central recommendation of the first report – to designate areas of higher density linguistic significance – was accepted by the Welsh Government within the narrative framework of strengthening the Welsh language in every part of Wales. To that end, the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities will publish its report on areas of mid and lower density in 2026. The current Welsh Government's commitment to accepting the principle of policy making for higher-density areas is clear:

The Welsh Government therefore agrees that designating areas of 'higher density linguistic significance' [Recommendation 2] is important in order to protect Welsh-speaking communities from further language shift.

With elections in May 2026, by now it will be the responsibility of the next Welsh Government to decide whether and how soon it will implement the Recommendations.

Nonetheless, the concepts of continuum and co-dependence between the higher, mid and lower density areas of Welsh as a community language will need to inform the development and implementation of public policy in this context.

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6. Interaction Between Areas with Different Speaker Densities in Basque Language Weakening and Revitalisation Processes

Asier Basurto Arruti (Soziolinguistika Klusterra)

Íñaki Iurrebaso Biteri (UEMA)

Abstract: This article examines the sociolinguistic effects of residential mobility on language use in the Southern Basque Country. Using microdata from the 2021 ECEPOV survey by INE (Spanish National Statistics Institute), new indicators were developed by cross-referencing speakers' place of residence, place of birth, and parental origin across different sociolinguistic territorial zones. The results show that the majority of Spanish-dominant speakers in Basque-speaking places originate from more Spanish-speaking areas, while in contrast, speakers who use mainly Basque in Spanish-speaking zones disproportionately originate from more Basque-speaking territories. These findings confirm that the capacity of the Basque-speaking community to reproduce itself is closely linked to spatial-demographic conditions, and that inter-territorial mobility flows are structurally intertwined with the overall evolution of the language community.

Keywords: Basque language, Arnasgune, Residential mobility, Areas of dominance, Sociolinguistic density, Territorial sociolinguistic dynamics.

Context

This paper analyses the influence of residential mobility of speakers on habitual language use in the Southern Basque Country, focusing both on inhabitants of Basque *arnasgunea*¹ areas who hail from more Spanish-speaking areas and those currently living in more Spanish-speaking regions who hail from more Basque-speaking areas.

1. Arnasgune (literally 'breathing spaces') refers to socio-territorial areas in the Basque context characterised by a high density of Basque speakers, strong intergenerational transmission, and Basque as the unmarked social norm. Unlike Fishman's 'breathing spaces', the concept has evolved into a context-specific theoretical category.

By cross-referencing speakers' and their parents' place of birth, their current place of residence and the language they use with family members and friends, and by analysing the results, we aim to gain insight into the sociolinguistic consequences of residential mobility between sociolinguistic areas.

The research conducted aims to serve as a starting point for highlighting the importance of the territorial perspective and spatial analysis in the study of sociolinguistic situations and their development. It also aims to underscore the influence of the dynamics present in each sociolinguistic area on the evolution of the entire community of speakers.

Theoretical framework

Sociolinguistic characteristics of *arnasgunes*

The concept of *arnasgune* stems from the term 'physical breathing space' coined by sociolinguist Joshua A. Fishman, which was applied to and developed in the Basque language by Basque Language Academy member Mikel Zabide.

A demographically concentrated space where Xish can be on its own turf, predominant and unharassed. Such spaces may appear abnormal or atypical vis-à-vis the outside, non-Xish surrounding reality; but vis-à-vis internal Xish reality, such spaces become potential oases of authenticity and centres of increased cultural self-regulation that seek to counteract the physical dislocation that minority life is so commonly afflicted with (Fishman, 1991, p. 58).

Although the concept has been interpreted and used in several diverse ways in international sociolinguistics (Dorronsoro, 2025), the most faithful development and use of the original concept can be found in the context of Basque sociolinguistics.

(...) the original meaning of the concept 'breathing spaces' had a fruitful development in the Basque context, where it has been literally translated as *arnasgunea*, and has continued being particularly loyal to Fishman's definition. Most if not all the literature on the *arnasguneak* has been written in Basque, so both the knowledge about and access to such niche literature is usually limited to Basque-speaking researchers (Dorronsoro, 2025, p. 6).

According to the prevailing view in Basque academic sociolinguistics (Dorronsoro, 2025), an *arnasgune* is a 'geoterritorial [area] in which Basque is the

dominant language of everyday use'. They are areas in which Basque feels like the 'master of the house' and is used 'without any extraordinary effort, reward, self-censorship or sacrifice' (Zalbide, 2001). In practice, the principal units of measurement and operationalisation for *arnasgunes* are municipalities.

Arnasgunes are the only areas in which language transmission from generation to generation is guaranteed in a continuous, natural manner. Joshua A. Fishman identifies the following as the '6th stage' in his RLS (Reversing Language Shift) scale: 'the intergenerational and demographically concentrated home-family-neighbourhood-community: the basis of mother-tongue transmission'.

For his part, Mikel Zalbide identifies six main keys to understanding the importance of *arnasgunes* (Zalbide, 2019):

1. The 'normal' language of everyday Basque, i.e. the one most similar to that commonly used in healthy speaker communities, thrives in *arnasgunes*.
2. People living in *arnasgunes* speak Basque effortlessly, with no reward, self-censorship or sacrifice, in accordance with an unwritten social norm.
3. *Arnasgunes* show that the Basque-speaking community is still alive, clearly showcasing what it means to live 'normally' in Basque.
4. They represent a fertile community of speakers with a high level of Basque and a rich range of language—a breeding ground for skilled and eloquent Basque speakers.
5. They are the only areas in which Basque is the predominant language of everyday use, at either the local or the regional level.
6. In the chain of children-young people-adults, generational transmission is assured.

According to Zalbide, *arnasgunes* also face three main interrelated challenges:

- A demolinguistic challenge: how to maintain the number and concentration of speakers (birth rate, migration, retaining young people in the area, etc.).
- A socioeconomic challenge: how to guarantee jobs and services in the area.
- A sociocultural challenge: how to maintain a well-balanced sense of community and social organisation, alongside a climate of 'living in Basque'.

Arnasgunes in the Southern Basque Country

From a demolinguistic perspective, Basque is clearly a minoritised language in the Basque Country (Iurrebaso, 2023). Indeed, 83% of the population (2.2 million people) feel more comfortable speaking Spanish or French than Basque, compared to 8% (210,000 people) who feel more comfortable speaking Basque. In the street, Basque is used 12.6% of the time, a percentage that has not changed over the past 24 years (Altuna *et al.*, 2022).

The *arnasgunes* of the Southern Basque Country² have shown signs of weakening over recent years. In quantitative terms, in 2021, only twenty-one municipalities in the Southern Basque Country were classified as *full breathing spaces*, with Basque language use being above 80%. Moreover, these municipalities only accounted for 0.3% of the population (9,424 inhabitants). A further seventy-five municipalities were classified as *affected breathing spaces*, with Basque language use being between 60% and 80%. These municipalities accounted for 4.2% of the population (118,093 inhabitants). This means that less than 5% of the population of the Southern Basque Country live in *arnasgunes*. In contrast, nine out of ten inhabitants (88.5%) live in municipalities in which the predominant language spoken is Spanish, and in many of these areas, Basque use does not even reach 20%.

Table 1. Municipalities and populations by language predominance area. Southern Basque Country, 2021 (Criterion: synthetic indicator of proximal use).

Area	Municipality		Population	
	Number	%	Number	%
<i>Arnasgune beteak</i> - Full breathing spaces (80%-100% Basque use)	21	4.0	9,424	0.3
<i>Arnasgune erasanak</i> - Affected breathing spaces (60%-80%)	75	14.3	118,093	4.2
No clear predominance (40%-60%)	52	9.9	196,214	7.0
Spanish dominance, not absolute (20%-40%)	61	11.7	316,829	11.3
Spanish dominance, absolute (0%-20%)	314	60.0	2,174,018	77.2
TOTAL	523	100.0	2,814,578	100.0

Source: UEMA, 2025 [Original sources: Population and Housing Census (Eustat-Nastat) and Measurement of Language Use in the Street (Sociolinguistics Cluster)].

2. This analysis has had to be limited to the Southern Basque Country, as there are no data sources in the Northern Basque Country that enable an analysis of the situation of the Basque language at a local level.

Although *arnasgunes* have a limited demographic weight in the population, they are the setting for a substantial percentage of Basque use in the Basque Country, due to the high percentage of Basque speakers living in them and the concentration and density of the Basque speaking community (Iurrebaso, 2023). In *arnasgunes*, most children speak Basque as their first language, and most native Basque speakers continue to use Basque predominantly in their everyday lives. One could argue that unlike in the rest of the region, the conditions in *arnasgunes* facilitate and encourage Basque language use and increased Basque language proficiency.

Language predominance areas as indicators of the conditions of sociolinguistic ecosystems

The concept of ‘language predominance area’ is a means of classifying a territory in accordance with language use levels (see Table 6: Classification of the Southern Basque Country by language predominance area). However, language predominance areas go beyond use to take the *entire ecosystem* into account. They are one of the basic elements used to diagnose the situation of the Basque language, as it is of particular interest to determine whether each language predominance area is growing or shrinking in terms of surface area and demographic weight at the regional level.

The concept of Basque *language predominance areas* is therefore linked to the regional concentration and sociolinguistic prevalence of Basque and Spanish. In demolinguistic analyses of minoritised languages, the concept can be used to analyse how a language group produces and reproduces itself. Language predominance areas are structural indicators of speakers’ basic language competence and opportunities for use. They determine the possibilities open to each individual to use one language or another in accordance with social convenience and personal and collective linguistic competence. The effort required to use a minoritised language rather than choose the ‘easier’ option depends on contextual conditions, influenced also by other motivations such as attachment and the desire to pass one’s language on. Language predominance areas therefore reflect the characteristics of the territorial context, and this has a direct impact on speakers’ individual linguistic behaviour.

Indeed, the dynamics that occur within these language predominance areas greatly influence the evolution of speakers. Native Basque speakers living in *arnasgunes* generally maintain their relative proficiency in Basque better than their counterparts living in other areas. Likewise, these environments offer ideal conditions for non-Basque speakers to learn the language, develop good skills,

practice speaking it and pass it on to their descendants. At the other extreme, in contexts in which Spanish is clearly predominant, it is difficult for non-Basque speakers to learn the language and for Basque speakers to live their lives in Basque, since the context is not conducive to this.

The importance of childhood and adolescence in language socialisation and the consolidation of speaker profiles

Language socialisation is fundamental to the monitoring of minoritised languages. Transmitting the language to younger generations is an urgent priority for the revitalisation and survival of minoritised languages. The early years of children's lives (childhood and adolescence) are a fundamental period for language socialisation and the consolidation of speaker profiles (proficiency, use and attitudes). From this perspective, the focus on increasing Basque knowledge and use among the younger generations (a key element in the overall strategy for the revitalisation of the Basque language) has had clear results (Iurrebaso, 2023).

The sociolinguistic context is a fundamental factor in children's language acquisition and conversion into speakers (Kasares, 2013). As such, it is important to broaden our view and analyse the factors that influence language socialisation outside the family environment, since, in language transmission, conditions outside the home often have a greater impact than those within it. According to Kasares, social networks in the immediate environment (friends, local or neighbourhood atmosphere) are a particularly important factor, as this is where most informal relationships are developed. In these extra-family settings, adult relationships have a decisive impact on children's linguistic behaviour. Interactions at home, at school and between adults are mutually reinforcing socialising activities that form part of the broader community-wide language socialisation process that occurs during childhood. The context in which speakers are born and raised is therefore often a key determining factor that impacts their proficiency, use habits and attitudes towards language.

Residential mobility as a key to analysing social structure

The concept of *residential mobility* has been defined in the academic literature as follows:

Residential mobility denotes the relatively local-scale relocation of individuals and households from one usual residence to another.

(Coulter & Thomas, 2020)

In other words, residential mobility points to the changes in a person's habitual place of residence, referring largely to relocation at a local level. This definition highlights the fact that people generally move locally (moving to a new dwelling in the immediate vicinity), a characteristic that distinguishes residential mobility from more distant or international migration.

There are several different theories and models for understanding the concept of residential mobility. For example, the first classic models of population mobility (push-pull migration models, Ravenstein's laws, etc.) linked changes of residence to improved living conditions or needs. Beginning with the classic *Why Families Move* (Rossi, 1955), this approach emphasises the fact that families move home when their needs change (children, job opportunities, housing conditions). According to these theories, changing one's residence is a mechanism for responding to the events and transitions that occur during the normal course of one's life (marriage, divorce, birth of one's children, retirement, etc.), which is why residential mobility is also analysed from life cycle and life course approaches (Coulter & Thomas, 2020). In contrast, more recent theoretical studies have tended to rethink residential mobility, viewing it as a relational practice that connects lives in time and space and, at the same time, connects people to structural conditions (Coulter, Ham & Findlay, 2015). These approaches combine geography and sociology, understanding mobility as the reorganisation of people's everyday space. Studies on residential mobility also take into account individuals' relationships with their neighbours, along with changes in one's local neighbourhood and urban structure, and the composition of social networks (Coulter & Thomas, 2020).

Residential mobility is a fundamental concept in several different fields. In demographics, these internal population movements are analysed in studies on population distribution and the growth and shrinkage of specific regions. For their part, geography experts analyse residential mobility in terms of its role in processes of neighbourhood transformation or gentrification. Indeed, it has often been observed that housing choices and population displacement can transform the socio-economic structure of a neighbourhood.

In sum, residential mobility is a key concept in many different disciplines for analysing changes in people's place of residence. Methodological, conceptual and theoretical approaches have been considered in the conceptual analysis of the term. Ultimately, this is because residential mobility provides a fundamental key to understanding the structure of society and its regional organisation.

To measure this phenomenon, studies often chart the number of families or individuals who change their place of residence within a given period: for example, the percentage of people who have moved houses in a year or the average number of times a person moves houses within the course of their life. According to census data from 2024 (INE, 2024), in the Southern Basque Country, most people (59.2% of the population) live in a different municipality from the one in which they were born. One may safely assume that these changes of residence have a sociolinguistic impact on both the origin and destination municipalities, as many of these moves involve a change in the sociolinguistic environment.

Research questions

In the present study, our aim is to explore the impact of residential mobility flows on the sociolinguistic situation, and to provide a preliminary answer to the research questions. The aim is to analyse how the residential mobility of speakers from different areas or sociolinguistic backgrounds influences language use in their destination municipalities. By way of example, the study seeks to answer the following specific questions:

1. Among people who live in Basque *arnasgunas* but mainly use Spanish in daily life, how many come from more Spanish-speaking areas?
2. Among people who live in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas but mainly use Basque in daily life, how many come from more Basque-speaking areas?

Sources and methodology

Given the nature of the questions and in accordance with the positivist paradigm, quantitative information was gathered to provide answers. The main source used was the *Encuesta de Características Esenciales de la Población y Viviendas* (Survey of Essential Characteristics of the Population and Housing), from here on referred to as the ECEPOV, published by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE). This survey was conducted by the INE in 2021 as part of its census study. Specifically, micro-data from the ECEPOV were used in the present study, including language variables and regional information (speakers' place of residence and place of birth, as well as their parents' place of birth). We submitted a specific data request to the INE in order to obtain territorial information from the ECEPOV that we then used to analyse language predominance areas.

This source fulfils the following two conditions. First, it gathers information about the variables on which the present study focuses, namely the use of Basque-Spanish and speakers' place of residence and birth. And second, the samples used are of an appropriate size, thereby making it possible to achieve the degree of disaggregation required for the present study. The study universe comprised 2,799,463 speakers who were residents in the Southern Basque Country in 2021, when the ECEPOV survey was conducted. For its part, the sample comprised the 27,763 records featured in the research micro-data.

Based on these sources, the methodology used involved the creation of new significant indicators based on the ECEPOV survey, along with their initial analysis using basic descriptive statistical tools. The new indicators created from the ECEPOV survey are outlined below.

Indicators of language use with family and friends

The ECEPOV gathers information on language use in three areas: (1) with family, (2) with friends and (3) in the workplace or place of learning.

Respondents are asked to what extent they use each language (Basque, Spanish and, for those who speak a third language, that other language). However, the way in which the ECEPOV asks about language use is prone to error. As shown in Table 7, for example, a sizeable number of speakers responded with impossible combinations. For example, many of those who said they 'always' speak Spanish also claimed to speak Basque sometimes, often or always. And vice versa.

Table 2. Basque use with family members crossed with Spanish use with family members. Southern Basque Country, 2021.

		Spanish use with family				TOTAL
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	
Basque use with family	Never	39,946	48,267	54,454	1,516,881	1,659,548
		% 1.4	% 1.7	% 2.0	% 55.0	% 60.1
	Sometimes	1,269	16,589	84,480	375,316	477,654
		% 0.0	% 0.6	% 3.1	% 13.6	% 17.3
	Often	483	64,812	200,296	61,236	326,827
		% 0.0	% 2.3	% 7.3	% 2.2	% 11.8
	Always	96,707	85,341	20,116	94,211	296,375
		% 3.5	% 3.1	% 0.7	% 3.4	% 10.7
TOTAL		138,405	215,009	359,346	2,047,644	2,760,404
		% 5.0	% 7.8	% 13.0	% 74.2	% 100.0

These data therefore have certain validity issues. Although the questions used to ask about language use in Basque demolingustics³ are more appropriate, the ECEPOV has unfortunately not followed this sounder trend when formulating its questions, thereby reducing the quality of the data gathered. Nevertheless, the data obtained in the survey are not entirely invalid, and our analysis was conducted on this basis. After classifying all the possible combinations reflected in the above table, we divided speakers into three groups:

1. Those who speak mainly (or only) Basque at home

- Basque *Sometimes* + Spanish *Never*
- Basque *Often* + Spanish *Never/Sometimes*
- Basque *Always* + Spanish *Never/Sometimes/Often*

2. Those who speak both languages equally

- Basque *Never* + Spanish *Never*
- Basque *Sometimes* + Spanish *Sometimes*
- Basque *Often* + Spanish *Often*
- Basque *Always* + Spanish *Always*

3. Both the Sociolinguistic Survey and the EUSTAT and NASTAT censuses have developed more appropriate procedures for gathering information on language use. In a single question, respondents are asked about their use of both Spanish and Basque.

3. Those who speak mainly (or only) Spanish at home

- Basque *Never* + Spanish *Sometimes/Often/Always*
- Basque *Sometimes* + Spanish *Often/Always*
- Basque *Often* + Spanish *Always*

Speakers were analysed in these three groups in accordance with the generated indicator. When processed in this way, in general, the data on 'language use in the family home' provided by the ECEPOV does not differ greatly from that used by EUSTAT to analyse language use at home.

The same criteria used to analyse family use were also used to calculate the 'use with friends' indicator.

These were the two language use indicators used in this study: use with family and use with friends.

Indicators linked to place of residence and one's own and one's parents' place of birth

The ECEPOV gathers detailed information on the following variables that are fundamental to our research aim:

- Speaker's municipality of residence.
- Speaker's place of birth.
- Speaker's first parent's place of birth.
- Speaker's second parent's place of birth.

Values reflecting the sociolinguistic characteristics of places of residence and of birth (see the fourth variable above) were assigned to each speaker in the ECEPOV sample, based on the values for geographical areas established by UEMA (the Association of Basque-speaking municipalities) in 2025, in accordance with its classification of municipalities in the Southern Basque Country⁴. This process gave rise to the following four variables:

- **Use in place of residence:** level of Basque use in the speaker's municipality of residence⁵.

4. To this end, the INE (National Institute of Statistics) carried out a special study in response to a request from UEMA.

5. The synthetic indicator 'proximal use' was used, calculated on the basis of the mean use of Basque in the family home among the inhabitants of the municipality and the use measured in the streets of the municipality, detailed grouping. Original sources: EUSTAT (Basque Institute of Statistics), 2021 and Sociolinguistics Cluster, 2021.

- **Use in place of birth:** level of Basque use in the speaker's municipality of birth⁶.
- **Use in place of birth of parent 1:** level of Basque use in the place of birth of speaker's first parent.
- **Use in place of birth of parent 2:** level of Basque use in the place of birth of speaker's second parent.

Each of these four indicators was classified into the intervals shown in column one of Table 8 and linked to the classification of language predominance areas (column two), with the correspondence specified in the table.

Table 3. Grouping of municipalities in accordance with Basque use: detailed groupings and language predominance areas.

Proximal Basque use in the municipality	Language predominance areas
Basque 90%-100%	ARNASGUNE BETEAK - FULL BREATHING SPACES (municipalities in which Basque is fully predominant)
Basque 80%-89.9%	
Basque 70%-79.9%	ARNASGUNE ERASANAK - AFFECTED BREATHING SPACES (municipalities in which Basque is not fully predominant)
Basque 60%-69.9%	
Basque 50%-59.9%	MUNICIPALITIES IN WHICH NEITHER LANGUAGE IS PREDOMINANT
Basque 40%-49.9%	
Basque 30%-39.9%	MUNICIPALITIES IN WHICH SPANISH IS NOT FULLY PREDOMINANT
Basque 20%-29.9%	
Basque 10%-19.9%	MUNICIPALITIES IN WHICH SPANISH IS FULLY PREDOMINANT
Basque less than 10%	
Outside the Southern Basque Country	Outside the Southern Basque Country

Source: authors' own elaboration.

6. It would be more appropriate to study the municipalities in which both speakers and their parents were born in accordance with language use levels at the time they were born and growing up, rather than in accordance with current usage. However, this is not possible at present.

Indicators for comparing the places where speakers live and where they or their parents were born

Based on speakers' current place of residence and their and their parents' places of birth⁷, we created the following three indicators:

- Comparison of the mean level of Basque language use in the speaker's place of residence and place of birth (based on proximal use)
- Comparison of the mean level of Basque language use in the speaker's place of residence and the place of birth of parent 1 (based on proximal use)
- Comparison of the mean level of Basque language use in the speaker's place of residence and the birthplace of parent 2 (based on proximal use)

These indicators may have one of the three following values:

- Born in a more Spanish-speaking area
- Born in the same place or somewhere with a similar level of Basque language use
- Born in a more Basque-speaking area.

Residential mobility and Basque language use in the Southern Basque Country

As explained above, language predominance areas can be used as indicators summarising the conditions of an entire sociolinguistic ecosystem: percentage of speakers, language use practices, the set of norms surrounding the use of each language, collective and individual proficiency, the presence of a transmission chain, etc.

When trying to understand the sociolinguistic factors affecting each individual, as well as those at play in their current place of residence, it is particularly important to consider the conditions present in their place of origin. If someone was born somewhere other than where they currently live and lived there for several years, their linguistic biography and experiences will be influenced by the situation in their place of birth. Similarly, if those who transmitted language skills, habits and ideologies to said individual (usually their parents) hail from a different sociolinguistic environment, that too can influence transmission. Even those born and raised in the same place may today receive a

7. These comparisons were based on the detailed grouping of municipalities.

hugely different sociolinguistic inheritance from their parents, a circumstance that may strongly influence their language socialisation process.

Level of Basque use by place of birth and place of residence

Let us examine this explanation by looking at the data. By way of example, let us see how the proportion of speakers who primarily use Basque with friends varies in accordance with the combined language predominance categories of their birthplace and place of residence. As shown in Tables 9 and 10, a speaker's birthplace and current place of residence, along with their parents' birthplace, are the three factors that determine their level of Basque use. For example:

- If we look at the current place of residence, we see that, among those residing in municipalities in which Spanish is predominant, only 2.1% claim to speak Basque predominantly, a figure that rises to 76.1% among those living in *full breathing spaces*. Intermediate areas show intermediate values. In terms of birthplace, only 3.4% of people born in predominantly Spanish-speaking municipalities speak Basque predominantly among friends, a figure that rises to 71.9% among those living in *full breathing spaces*.
- In addition to the speaker's own place of birth, the birthplace of their parents is also clearly associated with their level of Basque use. For instance, among those whose parents were born in a predominantly Spanish-speaking area, only 4.3% speak Basque primarily with their friends; in contrast, this figure is 60.4% among those whose parents were born in an *arnasgune*.
- Even more significant differences were observed when we crossed speakers' place of residence with their place of birth. Among those who were born and currently live in predominantly Spanish-speaking municipalities, only 2.4% mainly speak Basque with their friends; among those who were born and currently live in an *arnasgune*, this figure is 65.8%⁸.
- The lowest use levels were found among those born outside the Southern Basque Country. However, it should be noted that place of residence also has a clear impact on this group. Among those who were born outside the Southern Basque Country but live in an *arnasgune*, the level of Basque use is remarkable, with 9.7% claiming to mainly speak Basque with their

8. In this case, the size of the sub-sample was not large enough to enable us to identify differences between *arnasgune beteak* and *arnasgune erasanak* (full and affected breathing spaces).

friends. This figure is above the mean for the Southern Basque Country in general (8.7%).

We can therefore conclude that place of residence and speakers' own and their parents' birthplace are three variables that greatly influence Basque use. Moreover, the effect of these three variables is cumulative, with the data analysed indicating a clear logic in this regard.

Table 4. Proportion of those who primarily speak Basque with their friends, by birthplace and current place of residence. Southern Basque Country, 2021 (% of each group in each cell).

	PLACE OF RESIDENCE				TOTAL
	Municipalities in which Spanish is fully predominant	Municipalities in which Spanish is not fully predominant	Municipalities in which neither language is predominant	Arnasgunes (full and affected)	
BIRTHPLACE					
Outside the Southern Basque Country	0.3	0.6	5.0	9.7	0.8
Municipalities in which Spanish is fully predominant	2.4	8.5	27.9	33.4	3.4
Municipalities in which Spanish is not fully predominant	6.4	22.0	30.1	33.6	20.6
Municipalities in which neither language is predominant	11.8	24.2	46.7	44.3	39.3
Arnasgunes (full and affected)	21.5	34.3	58.1	65.8	58.2
TOTAL	2.1	15.3	36.2	51.9	8.7

Source: ECEPOV, 2021. Authors' own elaboration.

Table 5. Proportion of people who primarily use Basque with their friends, by current place of residence, place of birth and parents' place of birth. Southern Basque Country, 2021 (% of each group in each cell).

		Municipa- lities in which Spanish is not fully predo- minant (Basque use <20%)	Municipa- lities in which Spanish is predo- minant (Basque use 20%-40%)	Municipa- lities in which neither language is predo- minant (Basque use 40%-60%)	Arnasgune erasanak- Affected breathing spaces (Basque use 60%- 80%)	Arnasgune beteak- Full breathing spaces (Basque use >80%)	TOTAL
CURRENT PLACE OF RESIDENCE		2.1	15.3	36.2	48.7	76.1	8.7
BIRTHPLACE	0.8	3.4	20.6	39.3	56.1	71.9	8.7
PARENTS' BIRTHPLACE*	2.0	4.3	23.5	36.4	49.0	60.4	8.7

* In the interviews carried out during the ECEPOV survey, respondents were asked individually about each of their parent's place of birth. For the purposes of this study, the general percentages for all parents shown in the table were calculated by summing the results for all individual parents.

Source: ECEPOV, 2021. Authors' own elaboration.

The data therefore reveal **that context has a decisive influence on individual language practices**. It is widely accepted that not everyone born in the same place behaves in the same way, and this is true also for those living in the same place and those whose parents come from various parts of the world. **However, as a general trend, these three indicators are important for understanding people's current language practices. Analysing the associations and interactions that exist between the three may provide insight into local situations and trends.**

Let us now, therefore, analyse the data that may directly help us answer the research questions.

Use of Spanish in arnasgunes

By definition, Basque is the predominant language spoken in arnasgunes. However, it is important to clarify what proportion of the Spanish spoken in these spaces is spoken by those born and raised there, and what portion is spoken by those hailing from nearby Spanish-speaking areas. The more specific question is: what proportion of speakers who primarily speak Spanish come from more Spanish-speaking backgrounds? It is a question that needs to be analysed also from an intergenerational perspective.

Table 6. Composition of the group who primarily speak Spanish, by their and their parents' place of birth. arnasgunes in the Southern Basque Country (full and affected, Basque language use over 60%), 2021.

	Percentage of the population (%)	Percentage of those who primarily speak Spanish with their families (%)	Percentage of those who primarily speak Spanish with their friends (%)
By speaker's birthplace:			
Born in a more Spanish-speaking area	41.8	71.8	72.8
Born in the same place (or a place with a similar level of Basque use)	56.0	27.3	26.6
Born in a more Basque-speaking area	2.2	1.0	0.5
	100.0	100.0	100.0
By speaker's parents' birthplace:			
Born in a more Spanish-speaking area	54.5	83.0	81.8
Born in the same place (or a place with a similar level of Basque use)	40.7	14.8	15.4
Born in a more Basque-speaking area	4.8	2.2	2.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0
Summary indicator:			
Speaker or at least one of their parents born in a more Spanish-speaking area	69.4	91.6	90.8
The rest	30.6	8.4	9.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ECEPOV, 2021. Authors' own elaboration.

If we focus on speakers' own birthplace, we see that those born in more Spanish-speaking areas represent 41.8% of those currently living in *arnasgunes*, whereas among those who primarily speak Spanish with their family or friends, this percentage is much higher: 71.8% and 72.8% (respectively). Conversely, those born in the area represent slightly more than half of the population (56%), although among Spanish speakers, this percentage decreases considerably (27.3% of those who speak Spanish with family and 26.6% of those who speak it with friends). This means that more than seven out of ten people who mainly speak Spanish in Basque *arnasgunes* were born in more Spanish-speaking areas.

If we focus on parental birthplace, the impact becomes even clearer. Half of those living in *arnasgunes* (54.5%) have parents who were born in more Spanish-speaking areas. However, among those who primarily speak Spanish with family and friends, this figure is 83.0% and 81.8% (respectively). Conversely, although those whose parents were born in the area represent 40.7% of the population, among those who primarily speak Spanish with their family and friends, this figure is just 14%-15%.

If we consider both factors together (speakers' own and their parents' birthplace), we see that those who were themselves born or who have at least one parent who was born in a more Spanish-speaking area represent 69.4% of all those living in Basque *arnasgunes*. However, among those who predominantly speak Spanish with family and friends, this figure is 91.6% and 90.8% (respectively). In other words, at least nine out of every ten people who primarily speak Spanish in Basque *arnasgunes* have some kind of connection to a more Spanish-speaking area.

Basque use in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas

The sociolinguistic impact of residential mobility in the opposite direction is analysed below in terms of the birthplace and parental birthplace of the group of people who speak Basque more than Spanish despite living in predominantly Spanish-speaking municipalities (proximal Basque use less than 20%).

An analysis by place of birth reveals that those born in a more Basque-speaking area represent 4.5% of those living in predominantly Spanish-speaking municipalities, whereas among those who primarily speak Basque with their family or friends, this percentage is five times higher (21.7% and 20.0%, respectively). In other words, more than one out of every five people who mainly speak Basque was born in a more Basque-speaking area.

If we look at parents' place of birth, we see that the impact of this variable is even greater. People whose parents were born in more Basque-speaking areas represent 6.8% of the population in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas. However, they represent 32.6% of those who primarily speak Basque with their family and 27.1% of those who primarily speak Basque with their friends, figures that are five and four times (respectively) the overall percentage of those who primarily speak Basque. Almost one in three of those who primarily speak Basque with their family and one in four of those who primarily speak Basque with their friends were born in a more Basque-speaking area.

Table 7. Composition of the group of those who primarily speak Basque, by their own and their parents' birthplace. Predominantly Spanish-speaking municipalities in the Southern Basque Country (Basque use less than 20%), 2021.

	Percentage of the population (%)	Percentage of those who primarily speak Basque with their families (%)	Percentage of those who primarily speak Basque with their friends (%)
BY SPEAKER'S BIRTHPLACE:			
Born in a more Spanish-speaking area	29.8	8.6	6.4
Born in the same place (or a place with a similar level of Basque use)	65.7	69.8	73.6
Born in a more Basque-speaking area	4.5	21.7	20.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0
BY SPEAKER'S PARENTS' BIRTHPLACE			
Born in a more Spanish-speaking area	50.4	18.6	18.7
Born in the same place (or a place with a similar level of Basque use)	42.9	48.8	54.2
Born in a more Basque-speaking area	6.8	32.6	27.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0
SUMMARY INDICATOR:			
Speaker or at least one of their parents born in a more Basque-speaking area	11.7	44.5	37.8
The rest	88.3	55.5	62.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ECEPOV, 2021. Authors' own elaboration.

If we analyse speakers' own birthplace and that of their parents together, the results reveal that 11.7% of the population in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas were born or have at least one parent who was born in a more Basque-speaking area. Among those who primarily speak Basque with their family, this figure is 44.5%; and among those who primarily speak Basque with their friends, it is 37.8% (percentages that are four and three times higher, respectively). Approximately four out of every ten people who predominantly speak Basque with their family or friends were born or have at least one parent who was born in a more Basque-speaking area.

Conclusions

The study reveals that speakers' place of birth and current place of residence are both key factors influencing linguistic behaviour. The former determines, to a large degree, the conditions for language socialisation, whereas the latter determines the opportunities they have to use the language and how convenient it is for them to do so. The results also indicate that a good linguistic ecosystem can partially integrate residentially mobile speakers into the dynamics of its habitual language practice, and that the success of this sociolinguistic integration depends on both the density of speakers in the area and the size of the mobility flows.

In response to the first research question, the results indicate that the vast majority of those who predominantly speak Spanish in Basque *arnasgunes* hail from more Spanish-speaking areas, with seven out of ten having been born in these areas, and eight out of ten having parents who were born there. It is clear that residential mobility flows should be considered a key element in the analysis and interpretation of the linguistic evolution of speakers living in *arnasgunes*.

In relation to the second research question, the results indicate that the vast majority of those who mainly speak Basque in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas hail from more Basque-speaking environments. The contribution made by people born in more Basque-speaking areas, as well as their children, to Basque language use in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas is considerably greater than the proportion of the population they represent. Basque language ecosystems in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas cannot be understood without considering the influence of adults hailing from more Basque-speaking regions.

The favourable conditions Basque enjoys in these areas enable the creation and reproduction of fully fluent speakers for the entire language community. This capacity for reproduction not only impacts the local area due to residential mobility flows, but it also affects much broader regions in which the Basque-speaking community faces greater difficulties in terms of reproducing its own speakers. The contribution of *arnasgunes* and more Basque-speaking areas is therefore felt beyond these specific regions, throughout the entire Basque-speaking world.

Some reflections for the future

Research and intervention

The present study uses approximations based on cross-sectional sources that provide basic insights into the phenomenon under study. However, if the research parameters are refined and expanded, the results reported here may open up avenues for further exploration and the development of a specific research itinerary.

Given that research into residential mobility offers much scope for development from a demolinguistic perspective, it would be worthwhile to further refine the initial work carried out here, moving beyond place of birth and current residence to take into account also the different places in which an individual has lived throughout the course of their life. The study of origin could also be extended to include speakers' grandparents' generation and the conditions prevalent in speakers' or their parents' place of birth at the time of their birth. As a general hypothesis, it could be argued that the strong influence of residential mobility observed in this study on different environments may be explained even more effectively if the research were carried out using more precise procedures.

For decades now, some of the most major changes that have occurred in people's lifestyles and habits have been linked to mobility, in terms of residential mobility flows, daily mobility habits and international hypermobility (linked to tourism, academic studies, professional careers, etc.), among others. Given that these changes have a significant impact on sociolinguistic dynamics, the issue must be viewed as a much broader phenomenon than just residential mobility. The relationship between regions and their populations has changed considerably. This should prompt us to pay special attention to the spatial dimension of sociolinguistic evolution and explore other indicators, over and above the usual sociolinguistic ones. If this avenue of research were to enable us to determine how certain mobility flows (residential, work-related, leisure-related, commercial, etc.) facilitate or hinder Basque language use, said flows could be taken into account when designing strategies aimed at revitalising this minoritised language. In the field of language policy and sociolinguistic intervention, this information could be used to inform choices and expand existing approaches. Whether prompted by work or leisure, regional mobility and flows have increased and are now commonplace in the lives of today's Basque citizens. This has led to changes in both social interactions among individuals and sociolinguistic interactions between territories. Although some efforts have been made to understand these

experiences (Sorolla *et al.*, 2021), this is undoubtedly an avenue of research with enormous potential for development and further exploration.

Exploring the experiences linked to the transformation of sociolinguistic ecosystems in the linguistic biographies of speakers, from both a qualitative and an ethnographic perspective, may also be an interesting and fruitful avenue of research. How do speakers experience the move from a Basque-speaking to a Spanish-speaking area? What are the keys to understanding why such a move ignites a sense of activism for the Basque language in some yet prompts adaptation to hegemonic practices in others? This is an important topic to explore, since 21.7% of speakers who were born in a more Basque-speaking area but live in municipalities in which Spanish is the main language spoken primarily speak Basque with their friends (Table 4). This figure is high within this residential context. However, this piece of data can also be interpreted from a distinct perspective, namely that most of those who are born in an *arnasgune* and later move to predominantly Spanish-speaking municipalities do not speak Basque primarily with their friends. Within this group of speakers who move from an *arnasgune* to predominantly Spanish-speaking areas, it would be interesting to explore in greater depth the trajectories, experiences and attitudes of both those who continue to speak Basque and those who transition to Spanish.

There is enormous potential for leveraging the knowledge gained from the aforementioned avenues of research in public and social language revitalisation interventions. Such information could be used to develop large-scale plans and small-scale local interventions, both of which would increase the likelihood of ensuring a more effective language policy. Given that urban planning, spatial planning, mobility, the economic model and policies and interventions that affect spatial configuration all contribute to transforming the sociolinguistic situation, the most effective approach would be to articulate all these factors within the framework of a coherent, comprehensive language policy strategy.

People hailing from predominantly Spanish-speaking areas in Basque *arnasgunes*

The question of how to integrate a predominantly Spanish-speaking population is a fundamental challenge for *arnasgunes*. Basque sociolinguistics, the social movement in favour of the Basque language and public language policy stakeholders have already begun to focus on international migration flows and their consequences. However, it is also important to specifically analyse residential mobility within the Basque Country itself and to develop integrated reception strategies. In order to guarantee the continued predominance of Basque use

in these *arnasgunes*, we need advanced policies and shared resources aimed at maintaining daily Basque use. The material conditions for sociolinguistic integration within the Basque-speaking community must be ensured, along with the means to generate and reproduce among speakers, at a community level, awareness of and identification with their sociolinguistic reality.

People hailing from predominantly Basque-speaking areas in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas

Raising awareness among speakers born in predominantly Basque-speaking areas about their role in ensuring the vitality of Basque in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas may constitute an important step towards viewing the care and promotion of both *arnasgunes* themselves and more Basque-speaking areas in general as a goal shared by all those striving to ensure the revitalisation of the Basque language. Given that the health of these *arnasgunes* directly affects all Basque speakers, it is important for everyone to understand their vital role. Ultimately, it is the more Basque-speaking areas that have made a significant contribution to ensuring the continued presence of Basque in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas. The weakening of these more Basque-speaking areas would therefore have consequences for the entire Basque Country.

In terms of intervention, the results of the present study may inform new initiatives. For example, interventions could be designed for those hailing from areas with a higher prevalence of Basque, offering them diverse ways to maintain their Basque identity and counteract the prevailing tendency to adopt the use habits of Spanish speakers. Such initiatives could focus on raising awareness of the sociolinguistic conditions that foster Basque use, as well as on promoting the integration of Basque-speaking citizens and empowering individuals to face linguistic conflicts head on and manage linguistic stress assertively.

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7. The impact of Basque-language acquisition, according to the Basque-language vitality of each territory. Towards a territorial strategy for Basque revitalisation

Iñaki Iurrebaso Biteri (UEMA)

Abstract: This paper presents a research study on the impact of strategies for creating new Basque speakers on the region. It also presents a basic proposal for territorial intervention.

Based on data gathered during the Sociolinguistic Survey, the results reveal that the level of Basque language use among new Basque speakers varies widely in accordance with the municipality in which they reside: the more Basque is spoken in their environment, the more new Basque speakers use the language. We can deduce from this that the language revitalisation effort has yielded proportionally much better results in more Basque-speaking areas than in more Spanish-speaking ones.

The paper ends with a proposal for a territorial strategy to advance the language revitalisation process. The proposal recognises the leadership role played by more Basque-speaking areas and seeks to promote and disseminate Basque use in said areas as a means of enriching Basque use in the rest of the region. Within the framework of this strategy, it is essential to pay special attention to those areas that play this key role, and to determine the most effective way of ensuring this knock-on effect.

Keywords: New speakers, Use, Impact, Predominance areas, Breathing spaces, Language policy.

Introduction: ensuring the efficiency and impact of the Basque revitalisation effort

All public policies and social intervention programmes seek to maximise the impact of the efforts made, and initiatives seeking to promote and revitalise minoritised languages are no exception.

The effort made over recent decades to promote the Basque language constitutes a benchmark in the field of minoritised languages. The wave of support for Basque in the 1960s reversed a long-standing downturn in language knowledge and use and marked the beginning of an upturn in the Southern Basque Country¹. Up until the end of the 20th century, the Basque language underwent a clear period of recovery, influenced by social momentum and new post-Francoist policies. However, data from the last two decades indicate that this recovery process has since slowed down (Iurrebaso, 2024). Furthermore, future estimates suggest that it may even be entering a new decline (Siadeco, 2025). If things continue as they are, if the Basque-speaking community fails to react and appropriate policies are not implemented, this new phase of decline could lead to, among other things, a weakening of the core Basque-speaking population, the loss of what are known as 'breathing spaces' and a reversal among younger generations of the significant progress made in recent decades.

In this context, two fundamental ideas mentioned previously (Iurrebaso & Goikoetxea, 2025) are of the utmost importance: first, it is necessary to wake people up to the situation so that they take action in support of the Basque language. And second, it is necessary to prioritise Basque at both a personal and a political level. This requires a greater effort than is currently being made in support of Basque, including (among other things) the allocation of more resources.

Alongside this, however, there is a third idea that we consider to be fundamental: we should strive to make sure that our interventions in support of the Basque language become increasingly effective, so that we can achieve ever greater progress with the always limited resources at our disposal. We need to ensure an ever-greater impact, so that, day by day, we grow closer to achieving our goals.

1. The Southern Basque Country, or *Hego Euskal Herria* or *Hegoaldea* as it is called in Basque, is the part of the Basque Country that is under the control of the Spanish state. From an administrative perspective, the region is divided between the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country and the Foral Community of Navarre (Treviño County and the municipality of Villaverde Trucios, which are administratively dependent on Castile and León and Cantabria, respectively, fall outside the scope of our research).

The need to ensure the impact and efficiency of our revitalisation process is nothing new. The pro-Basque language movement of the 1960s, for example, had a clear objective right from the start: to prioritise the teaching of the Basque language to younger generations. This aim is implicitly based on the criteria of efficiency and impact, first, because children learn new languages more easily than adults, and second, because the benefits will be greater among speakers with a longer life expectancy than among the older population (whose life expectancy is shorter). This is therefore the basic criterion that has been applied (very successfully) in our case.

However, it seems to us that, in addition to the fundamental criterion of age, we should also ask ourselves in what other aspects might significant differences be found in terms of efficiency and impact. In which segments and processes of Basque society might interventions be most fruitful, and in which will actions not generally have as much of an effect? In our opinion, Basque cultural activity in the 21st century should strive to understand and identify these differential levels of efficiency and impact and refine its interventions accordingly.

In this paper, we aim to make a modest contribution to this by focusing on a factor that is vital to the analysis of the efficiency and impact of interventions: the territory. Do efforts to promote Basque have the same effect in different regions or areas? Is there evidence to suggest that actions taken to promote Basque have been more productive either in more Basque-speaking or in Spanish-speaking areas?? We will begin by taking an initial look at this general research topic, analysing the impact of the enormous effort made to teach Basque to non-native speakers region by region. We will leave the analysis of efficiency (i.e. the link between the resources earmarked for Basque language promotion and the outcomes obtained) for another time.

Context

Non-native Basque speakers in the Basque Country: *euskaldun berriak* (new Basque speakers)

In sociolinguistic terms, an *euskaldun berri* (or new Basque speaker) is 'someone whose first language is not Basque, but who understands and speaks Basque well' (UZEL, 2010: 59). Thanks to the efforts of both public institutions and citizens, and the significant work carried out over recent decades in the fields of education and adult Basque literacy, the number of new Basque speakers has increased considerably in the Southern Basque Country, as shown in Table 13.

According to the most recent data, almost 300,000 people who did not learn Basque at home during their childhood are now able to speak it well or fairly well. This is four times the number recorded 30 years ago. It is also worth noting that the overall growth experienced by the Basque-speaking population in the last 30 years is almost entirely due to the increase in new speakers. The proliferation of new Basque speakers is a fundamental mass phenomenon occurring in the Southern Basque Country over recent decades. New Basque speakers currently represent 11.7% of all speakers in the Southern Basque Country and 37.6% of all Basque speakers.

Table 1. Speakers, Basque speakers and new Basque speakers. Speakers aged 16 and over, Southern Basque Country, 1991-2021.

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
Speakers	2,162,181	2,215,703	2,275,436	2,359,417	2,410,637	2,397,982	2,427,363
Basque speakers	459,389	535,277	579,287	613,988	663,036	700,330	757,857
New basque speakers	65,772	103,343	172,956	197,097	243,144	264,080	284,818
New basque speakers in relation to the total number of speakers (%)	3.0	4.7	7.6	8.4	10.1	11.0	11.7
New basque speakers in relation to the total number of basque speakers (%)	14.3	19.3	29.9	32.1	36.7	37.7	37.6

Source: own elaboration [original source: ISL].

Favourable and unfavourable contexts; language predominance areas

It is a basic principle of sociolinguistics that speakers' behaviour is socially conditioned. In other words, speakers' network of relationships and broader immediate context (the neighbourhood or town in which they live, etc.) influence their experiences, behaviour and choices. In their research into the experiences of new speakers, Ortega, Amorrortu, Goirigolzarri and Urla (2016) clearly identify predominantly Basque-speaking and predominantly Spanish-speaking environments as favourable and hindering contexts, respectively.

Therefore, among other things, it is essential for a minoritised language to have geoterritorial spaces in which it is the predominant language spoken. Such spaces are commonly referred to as 'breathing spaces' (Fishman 1991: 58)

or, in the Basque context, *arnasguneak* (Zalbide, 2019). According to Zalbide, an *arnasgune* (or Basque breathing space) is a geoterritorial area with a high density of speakers in which Basque is the predominant language of daily practice, thereby guaranteeing the natural transmission of the language across generations.

The issue of breathing spaces can also be analysed within a broader variable that encompasses the degree to which each language is predominant in each specific area. Consequently, to analyse the social weight of Basque in different territories, we use the concept ‘language predominance areas’, in which municipalities (and their populations) are classified according to their level of Basque language use, as shown in Table 2 and Map 1². In accordance with that outlined above, these groups of municipalities constitute distinct ecosystems in terms of their characteristics and sociolinguistic dynamics. Full breathing spaces are environments that offer Basque speakers the most suitable conditions for living their lives in and improving their Basque. They are areas that offer unbeatable opportunities for speaking in and becoming proficient in Basque, transmitting the language and ensuring individual linguistic evolution in favour of Basque. At the other extreme, in areas in which Spanish is the predominant language spoken, it is more difficult for speakers to improve their Basque, since the dynamics at play are much more strongly in favour of Spanish (and against Basque). Intermediate areas follow an intermediate trend. The data used in the study were analysed based on these five language predominance areas:

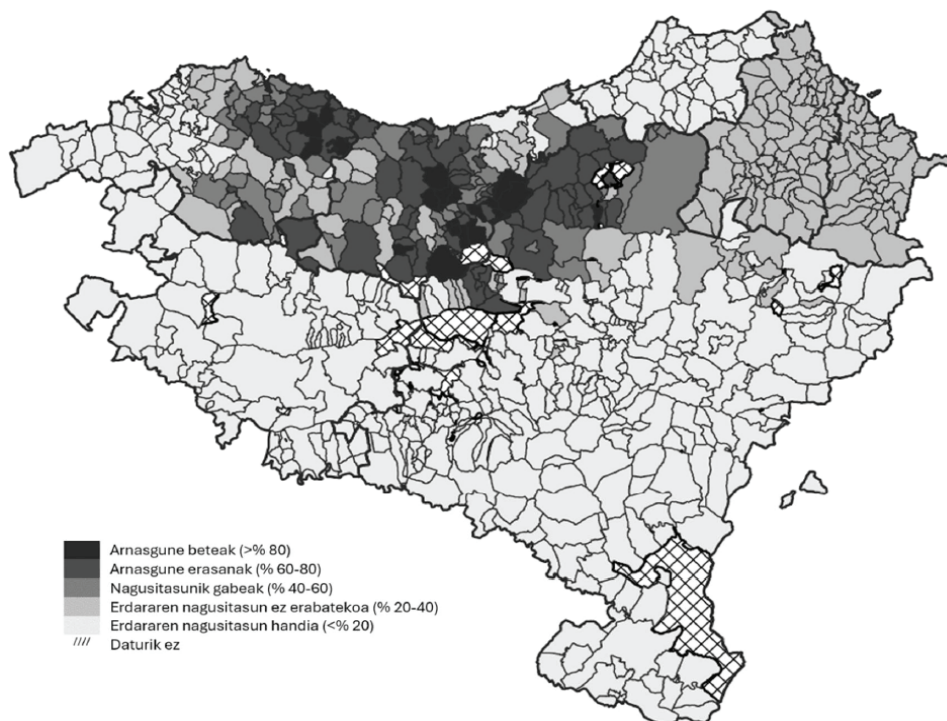
Table 2. Population in the different language predominance areas. Southern Basque Country, 2021 (Criterion: synthetic indicator of proximal use, combining use on the street and in the family home).

	Number	%
Full breathing spaces (80%-100% Basque use)	9,424	0.3
Affected breathing spaces (60%-80%)	118,093	4.2
No clear predominance (40%-60%)	196,214	7.0
Spanish dominance, not absolute (20%-40%)	316,829	11.3
Spanish dominance, absolute (0%-20%)	2,174,018	77.2
TOTAL	2,814,578	100.0

Source: UEMA, 2025 [Original sources: EUSTAT and NASTAT population and housing censuses; Sociolinguistics Cluster’s use measurement database 1989–2023].

2. We calculate what is known as the proximal language use in each municipality, based on the mean level of use in the family home (according to information gathered during censuses) and the mean level of use on the street (street measurements), and using the regression method to calculate missing data (UEMA, 2025).

Map I: Language predominance areas. Basque Country, 2021 (Criterion: synthetic indicator of proximal use, combining use on the street and in the family home).



Source: UEMA 2025. [Original sources: EUSTAT and NASTAT population and housing censuses; Sociolinguistics Cluster's use measurement database 1989-2023.]

Note: Data for the Northern Basque Country are aggregated by region rather than by municipality (based on the Sociolinguistic Survey).

Measuring the impact of intervention projects

Of the many types of indicators identified in proposals for assessing public policies and interventions in the social sphere (González, 2021; Hernández *et al.*, 2023), we will focus specifically on impact indicators in order to assess the final outcome of projects designed to increase the number of new Basque speakers in different language predominance areas. Impact indicators measure the long-term changes that have occurred in society as a result of the intervention; they are used to assess the extent to which the final aim of the intervention has been attained. For example, when evaluating an anti-drug abuse campaign, different aspects can be considered, including the number of people who have heard about the campaign and the number of young people who participated in the activities and events organised. However, if we want to measure the actual impact of said

campaign, we must focus on deeper, longer-term changes. Continuing with the example, we can measure the campaign's impact in terms of a possible decrease in drug use, or in the number of young people receiving treatment for drug addiction. In sum, impact indicators measure the fundamental and lasting changes that an intervention generates in society and in real life, not only among participants themselves, but also in the entire target region.

Research question

Our study attempts to answer the following question:

If we classify new Basque speakers in accordance with the level of Basque spoken in the area in which they live, how, in what sense, and to what extent does the impact of their Basque language acquisition on the local language community differ (impact measured in terms of real use)?

Our aim is to measure the long-term impact of Basque language acquisition by non-native speakers based on language use and local sociolinguistic context.

Why have we chosen to measure language use by new Basque speakers in order to analyse the impact of their Basque language acquisition? Because, in our view, this is likely the principal indicator of the change generated in the community by the effort made. Although a more in-depth study of the impact of the Basque language promotion initiative would require a broader approach, we believe it is safe to say that the long-term goal of this initiative was to transform new speakers into active users of the Basque language. Therefore, although we acknowledge the existence of a more complex set of influences, we have chosen to base our measurement of the impact of the process of creating new Basque speakers on new Basque speakers on the extent to which these speakers speak Basque in their everyday lives³.

To answer our research question, we used data from the Sociolinguistic Survey (ISL) to analyse to what degree those who learned Basque outside their family home use the language in their daily lives, exploring how this varies in accordance with the level of Basque language use in their municipality. We will

3. Using language use as an impact indicator may not be the best option in relation to areas in southern and central Navarre, which started from a predominantly Spanish-speaking situation and over the past 40 years have been the target of no (or very limited) public interventions aimed at promoting the Basque language. In those areas, merely learning Basque can be considered an achievement, even if this acquisition fails to subsequently lead to active use. Despite this, however, we believe that focusing on use is a good option for measuring the regional impact of Basque language acquisition by non-native speakers in the Southern Basque Country.

measure this level of Basque language use in accordance with the degree to which the language is spoken in the municipality, as we will discuss later.

Sources and methodology

Sources: The primary source was the ISL. This survey is conducted once every five years with a large sample of speakers aged 16 and over from all over the Basque Country. It is carried out by public institutions and directed by the Basque Government Deputy Ministry for Language Policy. It provides detailed information on basic sociolinguistic variables, making it the ideal source for our analysis. Specifically, we used the microdata contained in the *Basque Country Sociolinguistic Survey database (1991-2021)*.

We also used UEMA's (the Association of Basque-speaking municipalities) 'Calculation of Proximal Use by Municipality' to define the different language predominance areas (UEMA, 2025). That study in turn drew on the following sources: the EUSTAT and NASTAT population and housing censuses and the Sociolinguistics Cluster's use measurement database 1989-2023 (HEKN). For the purposes of our study, and in order to ensure more suitable sub-samples for the Basque breathing spaces, we also defined areas based on Basque use in the street.

Study universe, delimitation of age, region and time. Our research universe encompassed new Basque speakers aged 16 years and over living in the Southern Basque Country.

- Geographically, the scope of the research is limited to the Southern Basque Country, since the current lack of information at a municipal level in the Northern Basque Country precluded the implementation of the model there.
- In terms of age, the sample is limited to those aged 16 years and over, since the ISL only gathers information on this age group.
- Regarding time, we initially attempted to use the most recent data, that from 2021. However, we realised that such sub-samples of new Basque speakers in the different language predominance areas were too small for the study we wanted to conduct. Consequently, in order to obtain more representative samples, we used cumulative data from 1996 to 2021⁴. After examining the data by year, we concluded that working with cumulative

4. The ISL was first carried out in 1991. However, we have not included the data from that year in our calculations because we could not guarantee full comparability between the use data from that year and those from subsequent years in relation to the indicators developed here.

data from all 25 years would not significantly distort the results. We therefore consider this method to be valid for detecting current trends.

We can therefore define the population studied in this analysis as follows: the study deals with Basque speakers who lived in the Southern Basque Country between 1996 and 2021 for whom Basque is not their mother tongue. In other words, our research population comprises new Basque speakers who were aged 16 years and over during that period.

Sample: 7,062 cases that complied with the aforementioned criteria were found in the ISL database. This is a more than adequate sample for conducting a general analysis (a sample of this size yields a general error range of $\pm 1.2\%$, for a 95% confidence level and $p = q = 50\%$). However, as we will see, the sample size is considerably smaller in some language predominance areas (mainly affected breathing spaces and, especially, full breathing spaces). Nevertheless, although in these cases the sub-samples are smaller than we would have liked, we believe they are valid for detecting the general trend under study here. The sizes of the various sub-samples are shown in the tables.

Variables analysed in the study:

We analysed the relationship between the following two variables in relation to new Basque speakers, using cross-tabulations and means:

- As a dependent variable, we analysed use in face-to-face interactions among speakers. This indicator was created by combining different types of use gathered during the ISL (in family settings, informal conversations, interactions with work colleagues, etc.), and assigning each type a weight based on its importance in daily life. It is a synthetic indicator that represents the degree (in percentage terms) to which the respondent speaks Basque in each activity (for a detailed explanation of how this indicator was constructed, see Iurrebaso, 2024, p. 530).
- As an independent variable, we used the language predominance areas in which each respondent lives/lived classified into five main groups based on the degree to which Basque is spoken in the municipality, using the street use as our criterion.

Impact, or the degree to which new Basque speakers contribute to Basque language use, was measured in two ways, with two different methods being applied to the use in face-to-face interactions indicator:

- First, given the importance of those who speak primarily in Basque (Zalbide, 2016), we calculated the percentage of new Basque speakers who mainly speak Basque across different contexts (focusing specifically on those who speak Basque in more than 60% of their interactions).
- Second, in order to take into account the contribution made by those who speak Basque less frequently, we calculated the mean level of Basque use for all new Basque speakers, based on their self-reported responses, and then adjusted this figure to avoid the bias that is usually present in this kind of response.

Data collection and analysis

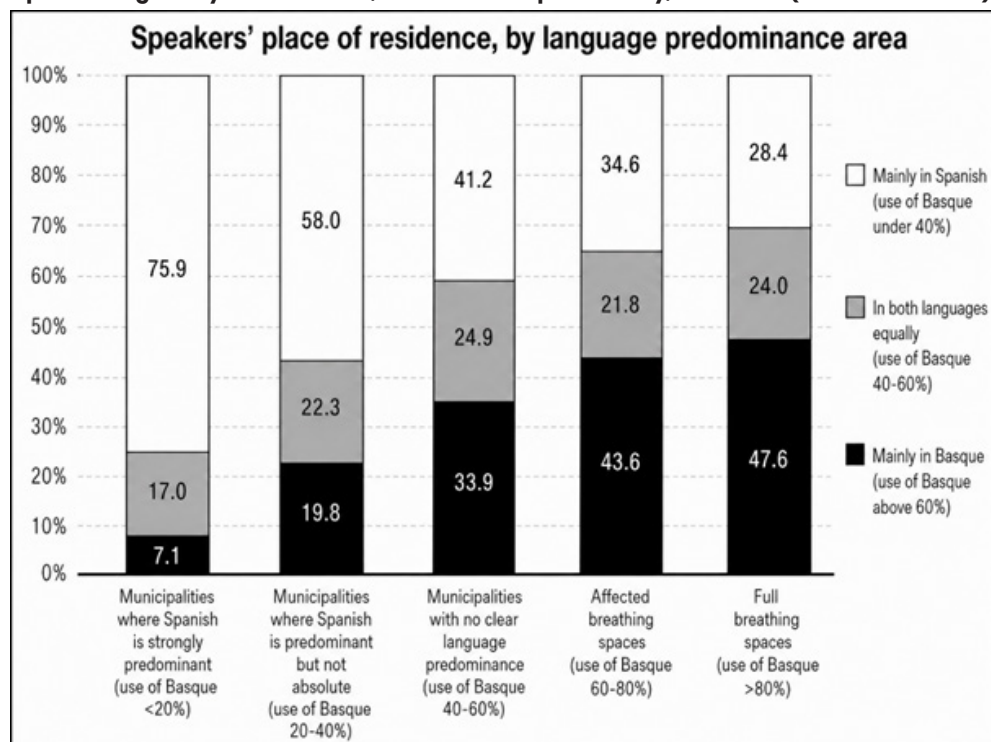
Measuring impact, focusing on those who speak primarily in Basque

Table 3 and Figure A show the distribution of language use among new Basque speakers in the Southern Basque Country, in accordance with their place of residence (more Basque-speaking or Spanish-speaking municipality, in terms of language predominance area). Taking the overall data pertaining to all new Basque speakers, the results indicate that those who learned Basque outside the home used Spanish significantly more than Basque in their daily lives during the period 1996–2021. Specifically, 10.6% spoke Basque more than Spanish, and 71.4% spoke Spanish more than Basque (the remaining 18% spoke both languages equally).

Nevertheless, these figures vary considerably depending on the environment in which speakers live. At the two extremes, only 7.1% of new Basque speakers living in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas speak Basque more than Spanish, whereas this figure rises to 47.6% in full Basque breathing spaces, where Basque is clearly the predominant language spoken in the local environment. Between these two extremes, the data reveal a clear pattern: the more Basque-speaking the context, the more new Basque speakers speak primarily in Basque in their everyday lives. It is particularly worth noting that, in both full and affected Basque breathing spaces, there are more new Basque speakers who speak Basque as their primary language in daily life than there are new Basque speakers who speak primarily Spanish.

Table 3. Language use in face-to-face interactions, in accordance with language predominance area. New Basque speakers aged 16 years and over, Southern Basque Country, 1996–2021 (cumulative data).

		Speakers' place of residence, by language predominance area				
		Municipalities where Spanish is strongly predominant (use of Basque <20%)	Municipalities where Spanish is predominant but not absolute (use of Basque 20–40%)	Municipalities with no clear language predominance (use of Basque 40–60%)	Affected breathing spaces (use of Basque 60–80%)	Full breathing spaces (use of Basque >80%)
	TOTAL					
Mainly in Spanish (use of Basque under 40%)	71.4	75.9	58.0	41.2	34.6	28.4
In both languages equally (use of Basque 40–60%)	18.0	17.0	22.3	24.9	21.8	24.0
Mainly in Basque (use of Basque above 60%)	10.6	7.1	19.8	33.9	43.6	47.6
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
n (number of cases)	7,062	6,224	410	264	105	59

Figure 1: Use in face-to-face interactions by language predominance areas. New Basque speakers aged 16 years and over, Southern Basque Country, 1996–2021 (cumulative data)

Source: own elaboration [original source: ISL].

Measuring impact based on mean use

Column a of Table 4 shows the mean levels of reported Basque use by language predominance area. The results follow the same pattern as that outlined above: in areas in which Spanish is the predominant language spoken, new Basque speakers speak Basque in (on average) 25.3% of their activities; this figure rises to 55.6% in Basque breathing spaces, with intermediate values being recorded for areas with a moderate level of use. These data, therefore, follow the same pattern as before, the difference being that the link between language predominance area and use level is significantly weaker than that observed among those who speak 'primarily in Basque'.

Table 4. Mean Basque use by new Basque speakers in face-to-face interactions, based on self-reported responses; calculation of an adjustment coefficient by comparing the self-reported and observed use of all speakers; calculation of new Basque speakers' mean level of Basque use by applying the adjustment coefficient. Southern Basque Country by language predominance area, 1996–2021 (cumulative data)

Mean Basque use by new Basque speakers							
	New Basque speakers' average use of Basque (%) in face-to-face interactions, SL Survey 2021 (population aged 16 and over, self-reported answers)	Basque speakers' average use of Basque (%) in face-to-face interactions, SL Survey 2021 (population aged 16 and over, self-reported answers)	Proportion of Basque speakers among all speakers (SL Survey 2021, population aged 16 and over)	Average use of Basque among all speakers (%) in face-to-face interactions (SL Survey 2021, population aged 16 and over)	Observed street use (HEKN 2021, speakers aged 2 and over)	Adjustment coefficient (the gap between self-reported and observed use: if self-reported use is 1, how much observed use is)	New Basque speakers' average use of Basque (%) in face-to-face interactions, 2021 (applying the adjustment coefficient to self-reported answers)
	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	$d = b*c/100$	<i>e</i>	$f = e/d$	$g = f*e$
Municipalities where Spanish is strongly predominant (use of Basque <20%)	25.3	41.1	23.6	9.7	5.2	0.54	13.5
Municipalities where Spanish is predominant but not absolute (use of Basque 20–40%)	36.6	69.2	56.6	39.1	29.3	0.75	27.4
Municipalities with no clear language predominance (use of Basque 40–60%)	46.7	77.6	71.5	55.5	49.5	0.89	41.7
Affected breathing spaces (use of Basque 60–80%)	53.1	84.4	76.2	64.3	69.9	1.09	57.8
Full breathing spaces (use of Basque >80%)	55.6	89.6	90.1	80.7	86.8	1.08	59.8

Source: own elaboration [original source: ISL and HEKN].

But how valid⁵ are the data shown in Table 3 and column *a* of Table 4 for quantifying speakers' actual use habits? This is not a question that can be answered quickly, so let us proceed slowly. First, a basic consideration: these figures are based on the self-reported responses of a sample of speakers who completed a survey; they are not a direct measurement of said speakers' behaviour. There is no guarantee that respondents actually behave in the way they say they do. As is often the case with survey techniques, although it is reasonable to assume a degree of association between actual behaviours and survey responses, they will not coincide 100%, since there will usually be a bias affecting what is reported. This difference has been a topic of debate for many years in the methodological literature on international sociolinguistics (Dell'Aquila & Iannàccaro, 2019: 530; Fasold, 1996: 186; Vila & Sorolla, 2009: 79).

In general, survey responses tend to *overstate* or *exaggerate* the use of the minoritised language in contexts in which a positive attitude towards said language predominates, and to *understate* its use in contexts in which the prevailing attitude towards the language is negative. In line with this general logic, in the Basque Country, it is clear that data based on self-reported responses regarding use tend to be more 'positive' than those traditionally collected through observation (Iurrebaso, 2012). Let us, for example, look at two data points regarding language use from 2021: in the observational measurement carried out in 2021 across the entire Basque Country, the use rate for Basque was 12.6%⁶ (Altuna *et al.*, 2022: 17), whereas according to the self-reported responses collected during the sociolinguistic survey conducted that same year, mean Basque use among speakers aged 16 and over was 16.6%. There is, therefore, a significant difference between the information collected in surveys and the results obtained through observation. Although other factors are also involved (we do not have time to elaborate further here), the data collection method used (survey or observation) is fundamental to explaining the difference between the two figures. It goes without saying that speakers' actual behaviour will be closer to the values provided by observational techniques than to survey data based on self-reported responses.

However, as is often noted in the methodological literature, the inherent bias present in survey data manifests differently in different segments of society; for various reasons, respondents from some fields tend to *overstate* their *actual*

5. Validity indicates whether or not the researcher has actually managed to measure what they wanted to measure; validity can be defined 'as the degree to which the data actually represent the situation they are meant to represent' (Etxeberria Murgiondo, 2011: 25).

6. The data from street measurements refer to all speakers, including children. If we were to focus solely on speakers aged 15 and over, the number would be slightly lower, and the difference between these results and the data reported in the sociolinguistic survey would be slightly greater.

behaviour more than those from other fields (De Rosselló & Ginebra, 2014: 257; Fasold, 1996: 187; Ó Riagáin, 2018: 40). Building on this idea, there are two points here that are important when interpreting our data. First, it is reasonable to assume that biases will be stronger among respondents who use Basque infrequently or occasionally than among those who use Basque as their primary language in their everyday lives. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the percentages shown in Table 3 referring to those who claim to primarily speak Basque will be less affected by bias than those in column a of Table 4, which reflect the mean level of Basque use among all speakers.

It is also reasonable to assume that the level of Basque language use in speakers' immediate environment will influence their tendency towards *over* or *understating* their responses. According to the methodological literature, it can be assumed that calculations based on self-reported responses will tend to overestimate use more in Spanish-speaking environments than in their Basque-speaking counterparts (Iurrebaso, 2024, p. 257). Our data support this idea (we refer to the data pertaining to all speakers, rather than just new Basque speakers). As can be seen in columns *d* and *e* of Table 4, the imbalance between mean use figures based on self-reported responses and those based on observation varies depending on the environment under study, with the figures being more overstated in more Spanish-speaking areas than in more Basque-speaking regions⁷.

Given these differential trends, we performed a series of calculations designed to counteract the effect of this bias (see Table 4). Specifically, for the entire sample of speakers, we calculated an adjustment coefficient for the discrepancy between use figures based on self-reported responses and those based on observation, for each language predominance area (see column *f*). Next, we applied this coefficient to the mean self-reported use levels of new Basque speakers (column *a*) in order to obtain the adjusted figure (column *g*). This figure, which was generated by neutralising the effect of the aforementioned bias, reflects a more appropriate approach to understanding Basque use among new Basque speakers living in different contexts than data based directly on self-reported responses. Consequently, from here on, we will use the figures from column *g* to quantify mean Basque use among new Basque speakers. According to these data, new Basque speakers in municipalities in which Spanish is the predominant language speak Basque in (on average) 13.5% of their face-to-face interactions, with this figure rising to 59.8% in full breathing spaces. Intermediate areas returned intermediate mean values. It is worth noting that, according to these

7. Indeed, in Basque breathing spaces, Basque use figures based on observation are slightly higher than those based on self-reported responses.

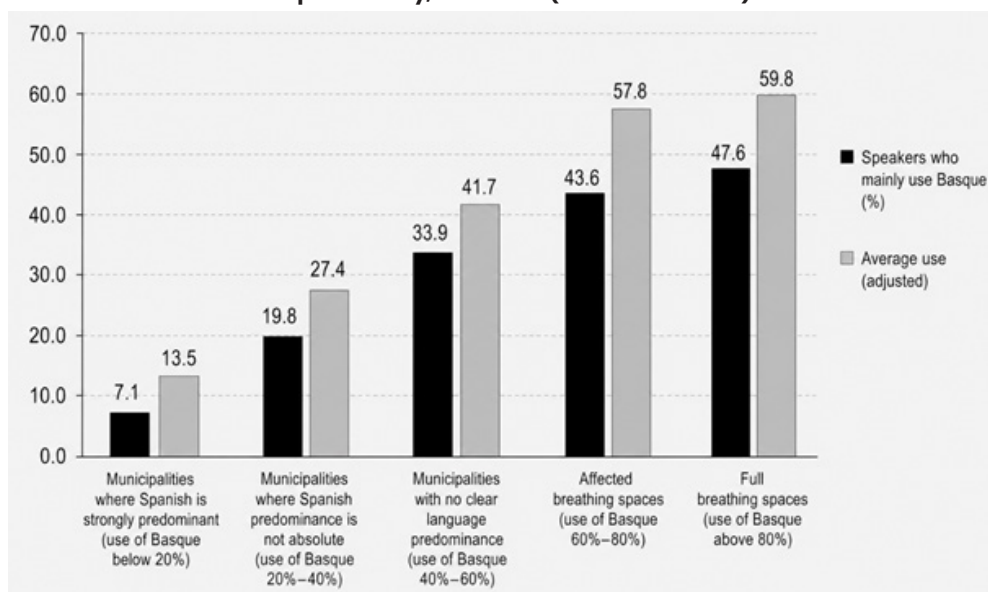
results, new Basque speakers living in Basque breathing spaces speak Basque more frequently than Spanish in their daily activities.

Summarising the impact of new Basque speakers

To conclude this section, Figure 2 summarises the main data for Basque use among new Basque speakers. The results indicate that use varies significantly in accordance with the degree to which Basque is spoken in the speaker's municipality of residence. In sum:

- In general, 7.1% of new Basque speakers living in predominantly Spanish-speaking municipalities primarily speak Basque in their daily lives, with this figure rising to 47.6% in full Basque breathing spaces. The figures for intermediate areas fall somewhere between these two extremes.
- In terms of mean Basque use levels (and after correcting for bias in self-reported responses), new Basque speakers living in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas carry out 13.5% of their daily activities in Basque. This figure rises to 59.8% in Basque breathing spaces. The figures for intermediate areas again fall somewhere between these two extremes.

Figure 2. Number of new Basque speakers who mainly speak Basque in their everyday lives and their mean level of Basque use, by language predominance area. Southern Basque Country, 1996–2021 (cumulative data)



Source: own elaboration [original source: ISL].

In terms of impact, therefore, the conclusion that can be drawn is clear: the impact of Basque language acquisition on new Basque speakers' Basque language use varies in accordance with the sociolinguistic environment in which they live. The more Basque-speaking the environment, the greater the impact. Indeed, new Basque speakers who live in more Basque-speaking environments contribute, on average, much more to Basque language use than those living in more Spanish-speaking environments. Looking at the two extremes, the contribution made to Basque language use by new Basque speakers living in full Basque breathing spaces is, on average, five or six times greater⁸ than that of their counterparts living in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas.

Conclusions

Variable impact of Basque language acquisition in accordance with sociolinguistic context

The more Basque-speaking the municipality in which new Basque speakers live, the more they speak Basque in their daily lives. Therefore, the impact new Basque speakers have had on the Basque revitalisation effort differs in accordance with the area in which they live, increasing considerably as the general level of Basque use in their immediate environment rises. The impact of new Basque speakers in areas in which Basque is most predominant is between 5 and 6 times greater than that achieved in more Spanish-speaking areas. This is the main conclusion of our study.

What is the reason for this variable impact?

Why is the level of Basque use (and impact) of new Basque speakers living in more Basque-speaking areas 5–6 times greater than that of those living in more Spanish-speaking areas? What sociolinguistic reason can there be for this difference? Context directly influences a series of aspects that are fundamental to understanding use levels in each group of speakers. First, in more Basque-speaking environments, new Basque speakers will have more opportunities to speak the language than their counterparts living in more Spanish-speaking areas. Moreover, new Basque speakers living in breathing spaces will often feel encouraged to speak Basque, whereas in areas in which Spanish is the

8. The ratios between the two extremes have been rounded off. The specific figures are as follows: those who speak mainly in Basque account for 7.1% in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas and for 47.6% in full breathing spaces (ratio = $47.6/7.1 = 6.7$). The adjusted mean Basque use figure is 13.5% among new Basque speakers living in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas and 59.8% among those living in full breathing spaces (ratio = $59.8/13.5 = 4.4$).

predominant language spoken, the social norms foster the use of that language. Similarly, the relative proficiency of bilingual speakers (which language they speak more fluently) will also work in favour of Basque use in more Basque-speaking areas and in favour of Spanish in more Spanish-speaking areas. All of this has a strong influence on the practices of new Basque speakers in different contexts. In addition to having more opportunities to use the language, new Basque speakers living in more Basque-speaking areas will become more proficient in the language than their counterparts living in more Spanish-speaking areas, which will in turn encourage them to use it more. Meanwhile, many new Basque speakers living in more Spanish-speaking areas will be unable to take the leap towards using the language; trapped in an obstructionist context, they find themselves unable to take advantage of or develop their acquired skills.

A hypothesis that requires an efficiency analysis

As stated in the introduction, we face the challenge of identifying those factors that influence the impact and efficiency of the efforts made to revitalise the Basque language. The focus of the present study was limited to measuring the impact of this movement at a regional level. However, if we were to measure not only the impact of the movement but also its efficiency—in other words, if we were to include the effort made and the resources used to ‘produce’ these new Basque speakers in the equation, and then if we compared this effort with the impact generated—it would be reasonable to assume that the difference between areas would be even greater than the 5-6 ratio observed in the impact analysis. Indeed, it would be reasonable to assume that the very process of learning Basque is faster in Basque-speaking municipalities than elsewhere, suggesting that when the effort made is linked to the impact achieved in terms of use, the 5-6 ratio would increase significantly. However, pending further data to support this idea, it remains a hypothesis for now.

Is the logic of differential impact generalisable?

Can this trend, which links the impact of the efforts made to revitalise Basque (a minoritised language) in the Southern Basque Country to the level of Basque use in the local area, be generalised to other minoritised languages? We do not have enough data to answer this question with sufficient scientific rigour. However, we believe that, since the variable impact observed in the Basque Country is due to general sociolinguistic processes and logics, similar phenomena are likely to exist also in other minoritised languages. It is our hope that future research will shed light on these issues.

Why adopt a territorial perspective?

From research to revitalisation policies: identifying the most productive areas in order to enhance the impact of policies.

The main conclusion of the present study is that efforts to revitalise the Basque language have had a differential impact across the region, with those who have learned the language in more Basque-speaking areas speaking it more than those who have learned it in more Spanish-speaking areas. Consequently, the mean positive impact of new Basque speakers has been greater in more Basque-speaking areas than in more Spanish-speaking ones⁹. Pending an efficiency analysis, but with a fair degree of certainty, we can state that the efforts made in more Basque-speaking areas have been significantly more productive than those made in more Spanish-speaking ones. Therefore, one key practical question that must be answered is whether this dynamic should be taken into account when deciding where and how to channel the efforts made by public policies and social stakeholders, or whether it is better to address these issues without considering this phenomenon.

Let us use a metaphor to illustrate our point: a region is experiencing famine and severe food shortages. They have several crop fields in their territory, and over recent years, they have noticed that in some of them, the seeds sown have yielded a considerably better harvest than in others. In light of this situation, what should they do during the coming year? Should they distribute their seeds evenly across all their fields? Or should they sow more seeds in the more productive fields? We believe that in this hypothetical situation, few would doubt what the correct decision should be: if the (limited) seeds available are sown more densely in the more fertile fields, they will yield a better overall harvest than if they were distributed evenly across all fields.

There are certain similarities between our situation and this metaphor. We believe it makes perfect sense for a linguistic community that is clearly in the

9. Some may find this confusing, as it may seem to contradict what we have said elsewhere, namely that Basque use has dropped most in more Basque-speaking areas, and that these areas are the ones which have weakened most. In this study, however, we claim that new Basque speakers have, on average, had a greater positive impact in more Basque-speaking environments. How can these two perspectives be compatible? Impact is linked to the internal dynamics of Basque-speaking areas: due to the characteristics of these areas, new Basque speakers living in them speak Basque more. To understand the evolution of Basque-speaking areas, however, in addition to internal dynamics it is also necessary to consider external dynamics, specifically the impact of population flows. These flows have been a decisive factor in the weakening of the most Basque-speaking areas. In sum, although internal dynamics may favour Basque, something that is clearly reflected in the linguistic behaviour of new Basque speakers, general dynamics have led to the weakening of more intensely Basque-speaking environments.

minority to redouble its efforts in its most fertile fields. The ability to make more headway with less overall effort is by no means an irrelevant consideration: Basque urgently needs to improve its results in its principal indicators, and the question of how to do this in the quickest possible way is a key one.

This highlights the need for a territorial strategy. But this is not the only argument supporting such a strategy.

The benefits of considering the different sociolinguistic dynamics that exist within a given territory

The Basque Country today is the sum of a series of interconnected territorial areas with different yet mutually influencing sociolinguistic characteristics. The more Basque-speaking areas exert a positive influence over the rest in terms of encouraging Basque language acquisition, whereas the more Spanish-speaking areas exert an influence in favour of Spanish (Basurto & Iurrebaso, 2025). Quantitatively speaking, this influence is strong. Due to the relative importance of each type of area (as well as to the general power structures), although their impact is bilateral, the ‘Spanish-speaking’ influence of more Spanish-speaking areas is greater than the ‘Basque-speaking’ influence of their more Basque-speaking counterparts.

A language policy based on a detailed understanding of these interactions would offer clear benefits. The aim would be to leverage and (as far as possible) strengthen favourable trends (the ‘Basque-speaking’ influence exerted by more Basque-speaking areas) and to weaken the effect of opposing ones. Ultimately, our efforts will be more effective if we design intervention policies based on a deep-rooted understanding of the interactions that exist between different areas, than if we simply choose to ignore these dynamics.

Protecting breathing spaces is a priority

Although this issue is only mentioned among the last points in the study, it is no less important than the previous ones analysed, as sociolinguistic theory clearly identifies the importance of breathing spaces for any minoritised language (Fishman, 1991; Giollagáin *et al.*, 2025; Zalbide, 2019). Maintaining and, if possible, extending a high-density area is vital for the advancement of a minoritised language community. We will not elaborate on this argument here. Nor will we call to mind the intense process of destruction suffered by these areas over the past century, and especially over the past twenty-five years (Iurrebaso & Goikoetxea, 2025). Nor indeed will we dwell on the fact that these breathing spaces may well disappear altogether in the near future if steps are not taken (Siadeco, 2025).

If Basque breathing spaces were indeed to disappear, the overall situation of Basque would worsen considerably, not least because their loss would trigger a decline in other fundamental variables, such as the number of fluent speakers, the number of those who speak the language intensely and the number of children to whom it is fully transmitted. Any weakening of the most Basque-speaking areas would result in a clear setback in the overall sociolinguistic situation of the Basque Country, bringing Basque closer to extinction. This is a key reason for implementing a regional strategy.

On the role of the capital cities

One clarification before continuing. Can capital cities and more densely populated urban areas play a key or leadership role in the language revitalisation process? Can these areas serve as a driver for fostering Basque identity in other areas and as a vehicle for more advanced language policies? Unfortunately, the conditions we find in such areas do not appear to be conducive to this task. First, because Basque is extremely minoritised in these areas. In the four capital cities of the Southern Basque Country, Basque language use is low or very low¹⁰. Recent sociolinguistic history has shown us that although the concerted effort made in these areas over recent decades has yielded significant gains in terms of knowledge (i.e. the number of people who can speak Basque), if we measure the situation using more robust indicators, we see that the progress made has in reality been fairly modest. For example, the increase in street use in Pamplona, Vitoria, and Bilbao has remained at around one or two percentage points for the past thirty years. This is not surprising, given that in such densely Spanish-speaking areas it is particularly difficult to foster Basque language acquisition and use, since the prevailing linguistic and social environment strongly favours Spanish. Moreover, looking to the future, we see new factors emerging that are unlikely to improve the situation. Specifically, the reduction in face-to-face interactions is particularly pronounced in these areas, international demographic flows are having a particularly strong effect on capital cities and their surrounding areas, and the logic of the real estate market is driving new (more Basque-speaking) generations out of city centres. In light of this, it is unlikely that the capital cities of the Basque Country will be able to serve as practical linguistic drivers of the Basque revitalisation process. Quite the opposite, in fact: these cities, especially Bilbao and San Sebastián, are currently spreading Spanish to their more Basque-speaking surrounding areas through demographic flows and

10. For example, according to the street use measurements carried out in 2021, 2.7% of conversations recorded in Pamplona were held in Basque, with this figure being 3.5% in Bilbao, 4.1% in Vitoria-Gasteiz and 15.3% in Donostia-San Sebastián (Altuna et al., 2022).

work-related and leisure mobility, among other factors. It would therefore be unrealistic to assign capital cities a driving or leadership role, since said role could only really be played (if at all) by more Basque-speaking areas.

Any reflection on the impact of the revitalisation effort on different areas should therefore strive to identify the role that capital cities should play. It would also be interesting to analyse and explore the different dynamics at a regional level, paying particular attention to the role and influence of the regional capitals. Given the leading role that capital cities typically play in sociocultural changes, their importance as seats of political, economic, cultural and symbolic power, as well as the fact that they often host mass events that attract citizens from a wider area, it is important to guarantee the status of Basque in these urban centres. This can be done, for example, by maintaining and strengthening key spaces for Basque speakers in both capital cities and throughout the region; or by ensuring that cultural and sporting events organised at a regional level comply with appropriate linguistic criteria. Many of the large-scale events held either in Basque or in support of the language seem best suited to the venues provided by capital cities. Furthermore, given that most of the population lives in or around these cities, it is clear that effective interventions in these areas are crucial to ensuring the success of the language revitalisation process.

A territorial strategy for the Basque language

Five general criteria for territorial action

As we have seen, there are sufficient reasons to expressly incorporate regional criteria into the revitalisation effort. The following are a series of general criteria linked to the territorial perspective that, in our opinion, should form the basis of our Language Policy. We propose them here because we believe they may help guide the debate on the subject. If the public, private and social institutions working to promote the Basque language were to reach a series of basic agreements as a result of a careful debate on these criteria, it would constitute a major step forward in our efforts to revitalise our language.

One: we must strive to have an impact on every single area. Given that more than three-quarters of the Basque population (77.2%) live in municipalities in which Spanish is the predominant language spoken, it would be a mistake to disregard these areas. Moreover, although it falls outside the scope of this study, for the language revitalisation process to move forward, it is essential to choose the right strategy for these areas, based on an analysis of the headway

made to date. In the more Spanish-speaking areas it is, in our opinion, vital to continue promoting language acquisition, earmarking resources to increasing the number of speakers capable of expressing themselves fluently in Basque, facilitating the integration of Basque speakers, strengthening the Basque-speaking community and promoting the visibility and impact of Basque-language practices and activities. We must determine how to increase the impact of our work in these (and other) areas. Ultimately, the Basque Country is becoming increasingly interconnected, and it is essential to have an impact in all areas.

Two: given that the sociolinguistic situation varies across areas, **our intervention approach must also differ accordingly.** Given that the situation of the Basque language in each area is determined by a specific sociolinguistic reality and a set of specific dynamics, it is important to develop intervention strategies adapted to each type of context. The first step would be to establish a clear set of municipality types based on sociolinguistic criteria. The next (very important) step would be to develop lists of general criteria, intervention strategies and successful practical experiences for each type of municipality in order to ensure the increasing effectiveness of the work carried out in support of the Basque language. Furthermore, these municipality types (with their respective sets of intervention strategies) would reflect the progression from more Spanish-speaking areas to more Basque-speaking ones, enabling each municipality to determine its current position and the position it would occupy if it were to progress.

Third: acknowledging the different roles played by different areas would help us progress more quickly and ensure that our efforts have a greater impact. Specifically, more Basque-speaking areas should play a leading role in the revitalisation process. This is usually what happens anyway in sociolinguistic dynamics, regardless of whether or not we intervene: more Basque-speaking areas have a knock-on effect on the rest (just as more Spanish-speaking areas do in the case of Spanish). Taking this natural tendency into account in our interventions will benefit the language revitalisation process. Like sailors navigating ocean currents, we too will progress more easily if we understand the internal currents of our sociolinguistic reality and use them to our advantage. More Basque-speaking areas could play a key leadership role, blazing a trail for other areas to follow based on the advanced policies implemented in them, as well as on local social practices. This leadership role cannot be understood in absolute terms; capital cities, for example, would continue to perform a series of functions, as explained above. When we talk about these areas being a driving force for the revitalisation process, we are talking about them exerting a practical, sociolinguistically effective influence.

We are aware that the challenge we have set ourselves is a stiff one, given that the knock-on effect that relatively small municipalities can have on much larger urban centres will inevitably be both limited and partial. Consequently, we must think carefully about what we decide to do and choose in which sociolinguistically critical fields we are going to try to strengthen the leadership role played by breathing spaces and intensely Basque-speaking environments, since we will not be able to focus on all of them.

Four: due to their greater contribution, the role they play in encouraging greater Basque use in other areas and their importance in maintaining the overall health of our minoritised language, **special attention must be paid to breathing spaces and those areas in which Basque use is highest.** One fundamental aspect in the Basque revitalisation process will be to expand (in terms of size) and strengthen (in terms of Basque use) those areas in which Basque is clearly the predominant language of everyday life. In addition to protecting and strengthening current breathing spaces, an active effort must be made to ensure that Basque-speaking municipalities that are not currently considered breathing spaces become so in the near future, thereby strengthening and expanding those areas in which Basque is the predominant language spoken. This will increase the scope and strength of the influence exerted by these areas on nearby regions. Following this logic, when planning actions and initiatives, a concerted effort should be made to preserve and develop these areas, especially as they become more intensely Basque-speaking.

Five: more Basque-speaking areas (especially breathing spaces) must become an effective resource for the Basque revitalisation effort in the rest of the region. To the best of our knowledge, no systematic research has yet been conducted on the role these areas and the speakers who grew up in them have played in the Basque language revitalisation process in the rest of the region. Nevertheless, we believe this is a fundamental issue. First, we are referring to the role these municipalities have played in the Basque language acquisition process of speakers from more Spanish-speaking environments, as spaces in which to learn or practice Basque or in which to spend holidays in a Basque-speaking environment, etc. Second, it is important to consider the influence that speakers who grew up in more Basque-speaking environments and subsequently moved to more Spanish-speaking areas have had on their new places of residence: skilled, active and often militant speakers have been transferred from more Basque-speaking areas to other regions. Third, it is important to acknowledge the contributions made in other fields by Basque speakers and those who continue to live in Basque-speaking regions, as teachers, professionals involved in numerous

projects and cultural practitioners, among others. In the future, we believe that specifically seeking out and promoting this type of knock-on effect, which can take many forms, may be a fruitful undertaking. This task would involve optimising and leveraging the natural role played by breathing spaces, generating synergies among Basque-speakers from different areas. We must maximise the role played by breathing spaces, providing of course that this practice does not compromise their Basque-speaking nature and their status as breathing spaces.

Note: it is logical to assume that the aforementioned criteria can be applied not just at a territorial level, but at a district or neighbourhood level also.

A map for advancing the Basque revitalisation process

Based on the aforementioned criteria and to facilitate their application, it is important to analyse the possibility of establishing **a legally-defined area of special protection and promotion**¹¹. The aim would be to provide stronger legal protection for Basque-speaking areas, thereby enabling more advanced policies, helping to ensure their preservation and development and consolidating and expanding a space in which, in the long term, Basque would be socially dominant. It would also help optimise their 'knock-on effect'. Ultimately, this area of special protection and promotion would seek to protect and enlarge the Basque-speaking region, while simultaneously fostering dynamism and interrelation between the municipalities and regions of the Basque Country in a way that benefits the language.

In our opinion, this area of protection and promotion should first define a *broad space*, aiming to build a geographically recognisable, demographically distinct and sociolinguistically solid territory in which Basque is predominant in the medium to long term. Next, in accordance with the second criterion outlined in the previous section, it would be helpful to define the different types that exist both inside that broad space and outside of it.

Three general avenues of action

How can we impact the situation in breathing spaces and, more broadly, Basque-speaking municipalities in general? Following the intervention model developed by UEMA, we shall now outline three basic avenues for action:

1. We must move towards **comprehensive policies**. To guarantee the sociolinguistic strength of these environments, we must address and

11. Another option would be to develop a legal linguistic classification that covers the entire territory; the possible advantages and drawbacks of the different alternatives must be studied in order to select the most appropriate option.

influence demographic, economic and spatial planning variables, along with those that will help ensure sustainable and vibrant communities in them. What we need are policies designed to ensure the comprehensive development of these areas. Moreover, we also need to pay attention to, measure and monitor the sociolinguistic effects of general policies in these areas.

2. Regarding those aspects on which **Language Policy** traditionally focuses (education, adult Basque language learning, culture, the media, leisure, etc.), **advanced policies** are required for these areas, focusing on both regulations and promotion.
3. It is also vital to empower and raise the **linguistic awareness** of speakers living in these areas. We need to foster an appropriate linguistic discourse and practices at the local level.

Developing these avenues of action is beyond the scope of this text. For further information, see the document *Euskararen Arnasguneak. Definizioaren eta erronken berrikuspena* (Basque Breathing Spaces. A review of their definition and challenges), published in 2024 by the Basque Government, the Government of Navarre and UEMA. Over recent months and years, our public institutions have repeatedly expressed their intention to implement new policies regarding Basque breathing spaces and, more specifically, UEMA has stated its intention to develop a policy proposal based on a territorial strategy approach.

Ekarpen A contribution to the boost that the Basque language needs

Current sociolinguistic indicators and concerning future forecasts highlight the need to take firm action in the movement to protect our language. Basque language revitalisation efforts need a new boost to put us back on the path to recovery. This renewed momentum, along with many other factors, will require a deep-rooted process of reflection and a series of proposals that prompt us to rethink and improve our actions. This paper aims to make a contribution to this.

Our aim is to explain why adding a second focus to the main one that has so far successfully structured the efforts in favour of the Basque language (the age-based approach that prioritises younger generations) would be clearly beneficial for the revitalisation process. The observation that the level of general Basque use in the municipality has a differential impact strongly suggests that assigning a leadership role to the most Basque-speaking areas and prioritising their protection would result in general benefits for the Basque language revitalisation process. In other words, it would enable us to progress more easily and at a quicker pace.

Towards the end of our paper, we have also ventured to suggest a territorial strategy designed to help us move towards this goal; this suggestion is meant as an initial (perhaps controversial) proposal that is open to improvement and further development.

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